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FEATURE STORY

The Scheme of Solomon Snare

BY · WILLIAM · HAMILTON · OSBORNE

WATCH FOR "QUICKER THAN THE EYE" IN OUR NEXT NUMBER.

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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TAKE NOTICE The next issue of "Mystery Magazine" will be smaller in size, but will contain practically as much reading matter as this number.

THE PUBLISHER.

THE SCHEME OF SOLOMON SNARE

By WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE.

WHEN Colonel Stryker and his mysterious companion were ushered into the presence of Richie Youngblood and his wife that morning, they found the air charged naturally with electricity. It was, however, electricity of a negative rather than a positive kind.

Richie's whole attention was obviously one of fear, terror—his lips were colorless. His face was as white as the marble exterior of his mansion on the avenue. His young wife was sitting near him, but with averted face. Her eyes were red—a condition that detracted from the beauty that belonged to her by right. She was completely unstrung.

"So," exclaimed Col. Stryker, as he drew his companion into the room, "this is where you are. Your people have ransacked the whole place looking for you, Richie. You seem to be keeping out of the way."

Richie Youngblood rose and held out his hand a bit dejectedly. "No particular incentive to do anything else, is there, Col. Stryker?" he queried. Then he glanced meaningly at the individual who stood at Col. Stryker's elbow.

"Richie," said the colonel, "desperate cases require desperate remedies. As your personal counsel I have done my level best for you—I have gone the limit of the law; I want you to feel that, because it's true."

"I know it's true, colonel," said Richie Youngblood

gratefully. "You have done all you could; no man could do more."

The colonel turned sharply to the man who stood next to him. "Mrs. Youngblood, allow me to present my acquaintance"—the colonel seemed careful not to say friend —"Mr. Snare. Mr. Snare, Mr. Richard Youngblood."

Mr. Snare nodded, stepped forward and laid a card upon the table. He was a peculiar looking individual of medium size and spare build with a very thin and intellectual nose and with a pair of sharp eyes that indulged themselves in a pair of very large eye-glasses with huge rubber rims. He wore a long frock coat. At first glance he seemed to be shabby. A closer inspection proved this first impression to be false. He was merely gray.

Col. Stryker, the personal counsel of Richie Youngblood, strode to the corner of the room where Gertrude Youngblood had retreated and bent his sympathetic gaze upon her.

"Desperate cases," he repeated to her, "require desperate remedies. My acquaintance, Mr. Snare, is a man of desperate remedies. I leave you in his hands."

He turned from her abruptly, crossed to Richie, touched Richie gently on the shoulder in a mute sort of farewell, and then abruptly left the room.

Richie Youngblood picked up the card that Mr. Snare had furnished. It read like this:

SOLOMON SNARE, *Adjuster*
Park Row Building, Manhattan

Richie, from his towering height of six feet four, stood looking down at the five feet eight of Mr. Snare.

"Well?" he inquired at length, after they had stared each other out of countenance.

Mr. Snare removed his rubber rimmed glasses and polished them with his handkerchief.

"Exactly," said Mr. Snare. And then he added, with an air of one accustomed to command, "Will you kindly order out the limousine?"

Richie glanced at his wife wonderingly and then pressed a button. In the course of a few moments a man in livery entered the room and made a brief announcement.

"Now, sir," said Richie to his unknown guest, "I am at your service."

What service that was was as little known to Richie as it was to his wife. As she lifted up her face to his, and as he bent down over her, a sudden fearful thought crossed her mind.

"Richie," she exclaimed in agonized tones, "you are not —not——"

"He is not," Mr. Snare assured her, "decidedly not. There are still two days left."

"Then you will come back—how soon?" she queried anxiously.

And again it was Mr. Snare who answered. "Within three hours to the minute," he replied.

A moment later they were standing on Fifth Avenue in front of the Richie Youngblood establishment and before the Richie Youngblood limousine.

"North or south?" asked Richie, as they entered the machine.

"South, of course," responded Mr. Snare, still with the air of one who was accustomed to command. "Grill-room entrance of the Hotel Monolith."

Five minutes later they were seated in the darkest corner of the café at the Monolith. Mr. Snare ordered drinks—also cigars. "Which you pay for," he remarked.

They had just lighted their cigars when Mr. Snare leaned over and laid his hand upon Richie's arm.

"Mr. Youngblood," he exclaimed in a low tone of voice, "there are three windows to your left. Without attracting attention, will you kindly glance at the man who is standing at the middle window? Take your time about it; be very careful not to attract attention; then tell me what you think."

Richie Youngblood kept on smoking his cigar. In the course of time he glanced casually at the man who was standing in the middle window. This man, as though by accident, occupied such position that the morning light shone full upon his countenance.

"Great Scott," murmured Richie Youngblood, and "Great Scott," he said again.

Once more Mr. Solomon Snare stretched forth his hand —a very steady hand with a very soothing touch—and laid it upon Richie's forearm.

"Mr. Youngblood," he said slowly, "you don't usually stare. Will you kindly close your mouth? Now look at me. Count ten. Now look at him again."

Richie obeyed these instructions, murmuring meanwhile an apology, but in spite of his usual self-control he could not avoid a second start when he permitted himself once more to glance toward the middle window.

"Look well," said Mr. Snare; "be very careful. Later you may tell me what you think." He waited patiently in silence, then nodded. "If you will pay the score now, Mr. Youngblood," he remarked, "I am ready to go with you any time."

Youngblood, in a daze, followed him from the grill-room into the open air.

"Who the dickens is that fellow?" he exclaimed, as they once more entered the limousine.

"Mr. Youngblood," Snare said, "how tall are you, if I may ask?"

Richie told him. The other man shook his head.

"The man in the middle window," he mused, as though speaking to himself, "is only six feet three and a half—and yet——"

"Who is the chap?" persisted Youngblood. His curiosity was intense.

"Oh," returned Mr. Snare, quite carelessly, "he is only number one."

Whatever he may have meant by that he did not say; he merely whispered certain instructions to the driver of the car. This time they sped still farther south. At the Thirty-third Street entrance to the Waldorf-Astoria they again alighted.

"What now?" queried Richie Youngblood.

"You shall soon see," said Mr. Solomon Snare. This time he led his charge into the upholstered luxury of the Turkish room. He glanced about him as though seeking for obscurity, discovered the locality he desired, and drew his companion into its shelter. "Now you may look about you, Mr. Youngblood," he exclaimed.

Youngblood, from the midst of a multitude of cushions, looked about him. Suddenly his glance became fixed—his eyes seemed starting from his head.

"Well," whispered Mr. Snare.

"I should say so," gasped Richie. "Another man in another window."

"Which window?" queried the adjuster.

"The first window," said Youngblood.

"Take your time," repeated Mr. Snare—"be careful. I shall ask you later what you think."

The next few moments passed in silent scrutiny. At the end of that period of time Mr. Snare escorted his charge once more to the open air.

"And who is he?" asked Richie.

"He," repeated Mr. Snare, compressing his thin lips, "is number two. Driver," he commanded, "the Astor House, Barclay Street and Broadway, and be quick about it, please."

Inside of twenty minutes they had finished their mission, whatever it may have been, at the Astor House, and were once more speeding north.

"Now will you tell me," exclaimed Youngblood, "just exactly what this means?"

For the one hundred and first time that morning Mr. Solomon Snare polished his glasses with his pocket handkerchief.

"Mr. Youngblood," he said, "Abraham Lincoln has been dead for nearly half a century. Of all the American statesmen, Lincoln's figure and his physiognomy stand out alone. He had more peculiarities in his make-up than all the rest put together, and yet you would be surprised if I should tell you that there are three men in the United States to-day—to-day, mind, when ruggedness of countenance is a back number—who are so like the Abraham Lincoln of the sixties, that were he here you could not tell them apart. Now, wait a minute. When William Howard Taft was selected president of the United States, thirteen different newspapers throughout the country printed photographs of thirteen different men who in weight, size, appearance, and in their facial expression, were his counterparts. In New York alone there are seven Theodore Roosevelts; there is another Roosevelt in Montclair; one in Plainfield; one in Buffalo, and five in the City of Chicago. There is nothing so commonplace as this resemblance, and yet, to the man in the street, there is nothing else in nature so remarkable. Do you begin to understand?"

"Not in the least," responded Richie Youngblood. "Tell me what it means."

"Merely this," answered Mr. Snare, "that if men of marked and unusual personality have so many counterfeit presentments, it is not at all remarkable that we of more ordinary mold should have a few. I have shown you three men here in the Borough of Manhattan. You have scrutinized them well. What have you to say?"

Richie Youngblood shivered. "Say," he returned. "I never in my life have seen anything like it. Each one of these three chaps is the dead image of myself. How did you do it? Where did you find these men?"

"It took time," admitted Snare—"six months, at least."

Richie stared at him. "You mean to say," he said, "that you have been looking for these men for six months?"

Snare nodded. "Ever since," he responded, "ever since Col. Stryker told me that your case was hopeless."

"He never told me," murmured Richie, hopelessly, "until yesterday."

"To go back to these three men," went on Mr. Snare, unmoved; "have you any preference?"

"In what respect?" asked Richie.

"In opinion," went on Snare, "as to which resemblance may be the closest—which man is your nearest counterpart."

"Before I answer that," said Richie, "I would like to know what it all means. What are you going to do with three men that look like me—what am I going to do with it?"

"That," returned Solomon Snare, "is my business, Mr. Youngblood. You pick your man—I'll do the rest."

"Well," mused Richie, honestly wondering what it was all about, "the man in the Astor House downtown seemed to me to be the real thing."

"Unfortunately," said Snare, "that man, number three, was drunk. We will have to eliminate him. He might not turn out to be quite safe."

Richie shrugged his shoulders. "I have no choice between the other two," he said; "they look both alike to me."

"Will you leave it to me then, Mr. Youngblood?" queried Snare.

"Of course I will," said Richie. "It's your game, not mine; play it in your own way."

Snare thought for a moment. "The name of the man in the Turkish room at the Waldorf is Gurney—Jim Gurney. He's a Jersey man in hard luck. The trouble with him is that he's not a university graduate—the resemblance is not quite acute enough. Suppose, Mr. Youngblood, that we try number one, at the Monolith—he is waiting for us now."

"Do you mean to say that he knows all about this thing, whatever it is?" gasped Richie.

Mr. Snare shook his head. "They all know that they are under scrutiny—they all know that they may be wanted any time. That much has been arranged."

A few moments later in a private suite on the fifth floor of the Hotel Monolith a mystified man who stood six feet four in his stocking feet was shaking hands with a wondering individual who measured six feet three and a half. The latter of the two burst into a puzzled laugh.

"Say, which is which?" he exclaimed.

Mr. Snare was introducing them. "Mr. Youngblood," he explained. "This is Mr. Morecraft—Mr. J. Higginson Morecraft, late of Boston."

A dull flush crept up into Mr. Morecraft's face. "Don't rub it in," he said.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Snare, "will you please be seated? The time has come to talk things over. Mr. Morecraft," he went on, by way of explanation, "this Mr Richard Youngblood is the Mr. Richard Youngblood that you have heard about."

Mr. Morecraft's eyes widened and his mouth opened. "Of the food trust?" he exclaimed.

"Exactly," returned Mr. Snare, compressing his lips; "of the food trust. Mr. Morecraft," he went on, "I think you understand and I think the public understands that Mr. Youngblood is only technically guilty of the very technical crime laid to his charge. He is a comparatively poor man. I doubt if his wealth all told exceeds some five million dollars. His associates in the American Food Concern are, as you know, billionaires. Mr. Youngblood was in a hopeless minority—he was as a lamb among wolves. When the government made its assault upon the American Food Concern—its successful assault—somebody had to suffer. Mr. Youngblood, morally innocent, is yet technically guilty. He must bear the burdens of the sins of his associates, otherwise his hands are clean——"

"I assure you that is all true," broke in Richie very earnestly.

Mr. Snare held up his hand to distract attention from Richie's sudden agitation.

"The court, Mr. Morecraft," he went on, "as you know and as the public knows, sentenced Mr. Youngblood not only to pay a fine—which he cheerfully paid—but also to serve one year in prison——"

"Hell of a prison, too," commented Mr. Morecraft genially. "I tell you Leavenworth is no joke. Excuse me."

"Every effort," went on Mr. Snare, "has been made on Mr. Youngblood's behalf to get this sentence reversed, to have it vacated, annulled—to have him pardoned. Col. Stryker, his personal counsel, and the influential counsel for the Food Concern, as well as the United States Sen-

ators from this state, have petitioned Washington in vain. There are just two days left before Mr. Youngblood starts for Leavenworth." He felt rather than saw that Richie had covered his face with his hands. "Mr. Morecraft," went on Snare, "you have several qualifications that have interested me. Among them are the fact that you ran a disreputable bucket shop in Boston and that you got into considerable trouble with the United States mails and that Massachusetts, your familiar hunting ground, is closed to you."

"I beat them out all right," said Morecraft, with a note of triumph in his voice.

"You beat them out," repeated Solomon Snare, "but it cost you every dollar that you could beg, borrow or steal. You can't do business in Boston, and you're going to be found out in New York. Those are only a side issue, Mr. Morecraft; the fact that interests me in particular is one of paramount importance."

Morecraft, who had not relished the plain statement of facts that had issued from the lips of Mr. Snare, now endeavored to change the subject.

"Say, Youngblood," he exclaimed, with familiar insolence, "why don't you run away—why don't you jump bail? You can afford it, can't you?"

"Mr. Youngblood can well afford to jump bail," replied Snare, "but the difficulty is that he can't jump it. The United States Government has closed all exits to him. We have thrashed that out—he can't get away. He must serve his term at Fort Leavenworth unless"—Mr. Snare leaned over the table and placed his face very close to the face of Mr. Morecraft—"unless, Mr. Morecraft," he added meaningly, "you serve it for him."

The remark brought the two tall men literally to their feet. For the first time they understood the full purport of the drama that was being enacted before their eyes.

"What," cried Morecraft, "me to Leavenworth? Not on your life."

"Be seated, gentlemen," said Snare. "Mr. Morecraft," he went on, "let us beat about the bush no longer. Mr. Youngblood will pay you one hundred thousand dollars if you will surrender yourself in his place on the appointed day and serve his one-year term at Leavenworth."

A momentary gleam flashed from the eyes of Morecraft. "One hundred thousand dollars is a good big bit," he said, "but I want to tell you, gentlemen, that I am not going to serve Youngblood's term at Leavenworth, but I am going to have his hundred thousand.'

"How are you going to get his hundred thousand?" queried Snare.

"You're going to pay it to me here," said Morecraft, "or else I'll go to the authorities with this story. You have made up your mind to get clear of this sentence, Youngblood. All right. In five minutes I will cut the ground from under your feet unless you make terms with me at once."

Solomon Snare's eyes flashed fire. Morecraft did not know Solomon Snare, but Solomon Snare knew Morecraft.

"Come back here, Morecraft," he commanded, "and sit down," as Morecraft started for the door.

Morecraft obeyed.

"Now," said Snare, "the thing you have just said was the first thing that I expected you to say; you are just the kind of a man to say it. Now, understand one thing, this is a desperate case; this is Mr. Youngblood's only chance; we are perfectly honest with you about it. If this chance fails, then, of course, there is no hope—we understand that. The chance has failed and there's no hope. In five minutes you will have called up the District Attorney's office and told him all about this case. Go ahead and do it. The result is as certain as death and taxes. In the first place, the government will not believe you when it finds out who you are; and in the second place, Mr. Youngblood will go to prison in two days. You will be not a dollar richer. If you want to earn a hundred thousand dollars, you can earn it in the way I say. You can't earn a dollar more and we won't offer you a dollar less."

Morecraft was a man accustomed to quick decision. He saw at once that Snare was right; that he was wrong. In an instant he had weighed everything. Personally, financially and socially, he was down and out. He spent two minutes in silent meditation, then he stretched forth his hand and grasped the hand of Youngblood.

"It's a go," was all he had to say. He turned back to Snare. "Mr. Snare," he said, "will you tell me how you discovered the resemblance between Mr. Youngblood and myself?"

Now, every man has a pride in his own achievements—a pride that sometimes goes before a fall. Mr. Snare was very proud of this achievement. He waved his hand.

"Oh," he answered, "I merely looked about me—looked about me."

Morecraft was studying his face. "And was I the only man you found?" he asked.

"No," answered Richie Youngblood.

Snare darted a look of anger toward his client. "Yes, Mr. Morecraft," he said, "you were the only man."

The next day in a remote corner of Manhattan, in a third-class hotel parlor, Mr. Morecraft, of Boston, was seated face to face with Mr. James Gurney, of New Jersey. There was the same resemblance between Mr. Morecraft and Mr. Gurney that there was between Mr. Youngblood and Mr. Morecraft.

"No matter," said Morecraft, "how I traced you, no matter what that other duffer wanted, this is the real business in hand. You go to Leavenworth to-morrow. You get fifty thousand dollars cash——"

"When do I get it?" gulped Jim Gurney.

"Before they lay a hand upon you," answered Morecraft. "I'll see to that and you'll see to it, too. If you don't get it, you can give the snap away."

An hour later Gurney held his hand across the table. "I'll go you, partner," he exclaimed; "only there's one thing. There's a girl over in Jersey at a place called Donaldson. I would like to have her here before"—he drew his hand over his mouth reflectively—"I would like to have her here just before the time," he went on, "and yet I would like to have you fix it so she does not know."

"I'll fix everything," said Morecraft, "leave that to me."

At eleven o'clockk next day two men made certain independent arrangements each for himself. Mr. Morecraft, it is true, knew all about the arrangements of Mr. Snare, but Mr. Snare knew little of the arrangements of Mr. Morecraft. There were on Mr. Snare's part three things to be arranged; first, Morecraft must have the money; second, if he got it, he must be surrendered; third, care must be taken to prevent his escape between the time of his getting the money and the moment when the handcuffs were locked upon his wrists. These arrangements were complicated by a fourth. Morecraft desired an instant's opportunity to deliver the bills to a third party in his confidence for safe keeping.

At eleven-thirty next morning in one of a suite of three rooms in the Monolith, Snare handed the bills to Morecraft. Morecraft counted them. Snare stepped into the corridor and watched three doors leading from the suite.

Morecraft, on his part, crossed the second room in the suite and unlocked the door of the third room. In that room he found two people, a man and a girl. Silently he handed to the man half of the money that he had received and then sat down and waited.

"Girlie," said Jim Gurney, speaking quite without the aid of a university education, "I am rotten and no good. You have told me that and it's true. I am going to do just what you told me to do; I'm going away for a year—no matter where—and I'm going to make a man of myself. If I don't make good you said you never wanted to hear from me again and you won't, but if I do make good I'll be back in a year. Will you wait a year—will you give me just another chance?"

The girl drew her hands across her eyes. "Where are you going, Jim?" she asked.

Gurney shook his head. "It makes no difference, little one," he answered, "I'm just going away by myself and I'm coming back. Meantime I want to give you something that I've earned fair and square. It's a fortune; it's fifty thousand dollars. It belongs to me and to no one else and I came by it honest. You take it. I give it to you. Do you understand?"

The girl turned white. She looked at Morecraft. "Is he speaking the truth?" she asked. She recoiled suddenly. "Who are you who looks so like Jim Gurney?" she demanded. "What game is this?"

Morecraft nodded soothingly. "It's all right, Miss Stedman," he returned. "The money is Jim's; he has earned it fair and square, but if he keeps it, it will be his ruin. It is yours; I give you my word that it is all open and aboveboard."

"So help me God, it is," said Gurney. "You will take it, little one."

"I'll take it," she answered, "and I'll keep it safe for you."

Gurney shifted his glance from the girl to Morecraft. He noted that that gentleman's gaze was held upon the bills as he passed them to the girl. He placed his hand on his hip pocket, drew forth a small revolver and handed it to her.

"Tuck that away, girlie," he exclaimed. "You may need it some time or other, and you are sure you're going to wait a year for me."

"I don't understand it, Jim," she said, "but I'll wait a year for you."

"Now," said Morecraft, "you can go."

The girl turned to the door that led into the corridor, fumbled with the lock for an instant, drew the door open and stepped into the corridor. There was a sound of hastening footsteps as she did so. Mr. Snare, outside, had become momentarily alarmed. Within Morecraft nodded to Jim Gurney.

"Gurney," he said, drawing forth his watch, "step into the next room. Those chaps are waiting for you by this time."

A moment later Mr. Snare, from a convenient turning point in the corridor, saw to his inward satisfaction a tall, stalwart individual stride down the corridor linked invisibly but securely to two of the marshal's men. He followed them at a discreet distance, saw them enter the elevator, took the next car down and reached the street just as the three stepped into Youngblood's limousine.

Thereafter Mr. Snare went into retirement for a week. At the end of that week he stood face to face with Mrs. Youngblood.

"Is Richie safe?" she asked for perhaps the fiftieth time.

Mr. Snare now was able to answer the question. "Absolutely," he replied. "You need have no further fear upon that score. There is one thing, however, Mrs. Youngblood," he went on, "that you must consider. Out in Leavenworth lies your husband——"

"Not really," she protested.

"Of course not," he replied. "The man in Leavenworth is a man of the name of Morecraft, so far as you and I are concerned; but so far as the government and the ever-eager public is concerned, your husband is confined there. Mrs. Youngblood," he went on, "a woman, especially a woman in your situation, usually takes some interest in her husband——" He stopped.

She thought for a moment and then she nodded understandingly. "You think I should visit Leavenworth?" she asked.

"Undoubtedly," he returned. "Frequently at first and always regularly. I would not stop there; I think you should petition the government for pardon—you should make a canvass among your friends; possibly you may have to see the president."

"Do you think," she asked, "that it is necessary to go through with this?"

"For Mr. Youngblood's safety, yes," he answered; "I am sure it is."

"And," she faltered, "is this Mr. Morecraft—does he know enough to play the game?"

"Trust him," responded Snare.

Morecraft did, in fact, know enough to play the game. He had played it so far well. He, of course, was not in Leavenworth. It was enough for him that another man was offered up in vicarious sacrifice on the altar of justice. But Mr. Morecraft's playing of the game was not finishel; it had only just begun.

Over in Donaldson, New Jersey, there was a young woman of the name of Amy Stedman, who had in her custody some fifty thousand dollars. Possibly she had banked it; possibly she had not.

Without the slightest hesitation Mr. Morecraft settled down in the town of Donaldson, New Jersey. Forthwith he renewed his acquaintance with Miss Amy Stedman; an acquaintance began in a private suite of rooms in the Hotel Monolith. When he appeared in Donaldson, she and other people in the place took him naturally for Gurney. Miss Stedman recognized her mistake at once. It was no part of Mr. Morecraft's plan to be mistaken for a ne'er-do-well, but it was part of his plan to gain the confidence of Miss Amy Stedman and to appear to be in constant communication with Mr. James Gurney. Mr. Morecraft was in no hurry; his main object was to induce Miss Stedman to invest safely the fifty thousand dollars left in her charge. It was three weeks before he even mentioned it to her, but in that three weeks he had made tremendous strides in obtaining her confidence. At the end of the fourth week she had succumbed—speaking financially—and it was arranged that he should exchange his bonds and mortgages—all bearing six per cent interest—for her fifty thousand dollars at a certain time and at a certain place.

The place was her own home and the time was eleven o'clock in the morning. Mr. Morecraft reached there at ten-thirty. At a quarter of eleven he had fully explained all the contents of the bonds and mortgages to Miss Stedman and in her company was about to leave her house for the purpose of going to the bank.

At that juncture a strange thing happened—another woman entered the arena of events. This other woman drove up to the Stedman cottage in a machine, alighted, and somewhat nervously pressed the button at the door.

She was admitted by Miss Stedman herself. No sooner had she been admitted than she stepped back in affright and turned exceeding pale. Over Miss Stedman's shoulder she had seen the towering form of Mr. Morecraft.

"Richie," she exclaimed. "I thought—I thought——"

She stared at Mr. Morecraft for a moment and suddenly regained her composure.

"I beg your pardon," she said, drawing herself once more into self-possession; "I mistook you for Mr. Youngblood. You are not he after all."

"This," said Miss Stedman, bowing, "is Mr. Morecraft, and may I ask you——"

"Yes," answered the newcomer, "I am Mrs. Richard Youngblood, and I am seeking Miss Stedman. You are she, are you not? At least you answer the description."

"Whose description?" faltered Miss Stedman.

"Mr. Gurney's," answered Mrs. Youngblood.

Miss Stedman turned pale at first, and then her face flushed exceedingly. For a moment she regarded her visitor with something akin to horror. What did Jim Gurney have to do with a woman who dressed and looked and acted like this? But Mrs. Youngblood had a mission to perform.

"I have seen Mr. Gurney," she said. "I can't tell you where or when—merely that he is living and well and that he sent two messages. One, his love——" Mrs. Youngblood halted for a moment and her eyes again sought the countenance of Mr. Morecraft. "The second message," she went on, "I am requested to deliver to you alone."

Mr. Morecraft was equal to the occasion. "Allow me to retire," he said.

He did so and the message, whatever it may have been, was delivered immediately. An instant after delivering it Mrs. Youngblood stepped into her machine and was whirled away. She reached her home on Fifth Avenue that night after dark.

"A gentleman to see you, Mrs. Bloodgood," said her footman. "He insisted upon waiting and has been here half an hour; he is in the music room."

There was unquestionably in the attitude of the footman some suppressed excitement which was noticeable even to his mistress. She swept on into the music room and as she did so the visitor leaped to his feet. Once more it was Mrs. Youngblood's turn to fall back. Then she rushed forward.

"I thought you were in Europe," she began. Then she stopped herself, for it was borne in upon her once more that this man was not Richie Youngblood—that he was still Mr. Morecraft.

Mr. Morecraft's manner was the reverse of affable. "Mrs. Youngblood," he said, "we may as well understand one another. You seem to consider that you have the privilege of throwing my deals and I possibly have the privilege of throwing yours."

"Throwing your deals," she faltered.

"Exactly," said Mr. Morecraft, assuming a threatening air. "You interfered with a transaction of mine to-day which would have netted me thousands of dollars."

"I interfered," she cried. "I think you are mistaken. I only delivered a message."

"The message you delivered," he blustered, "whatever it was, kept that woman from closing the deal she agreed to close. You had your innings, now I will have mine."

"Yours," she faltered; "I fail to understand."

"You don't fail to understand," he went on, "that your husband is under a year's sentence and that a man named Gurney is serving that sentence for him. That is very dear to you, isn't it?"

"And if it is?" she asked.

"It is also very clear to me," he continued, "very clear. I'm one of the few people who understand the situation—who know the facts. Mrs. Youngblood," he suddenly went on, "how much as you going to give me to hold my tongue?"

"I must have time to think," she said. That was the important thing, to have time to think.

Mr. Morecraft was perfectly willing. He placed his silk hat, which he had been carrying in his hand, upon the white enamel cover of the baby grand piano, laid his gloves and cane by its side and doffed his overcoat. He glanced triumphantly about the music room and into the curtained vistas beyond.

"I can make myself very comfortable here," he murmured. "Take all the time you want. I think, however," he added, "that you had better let your servants know that your husband is in the house."

"What do you mean?" she demanded.

"I mean," he said impudently, "that until you find yourself ready, able and willing to hand me over a cool half million I intend to do just what Mr. Richard Youngblood asks me to do. He paid me to take his place. Until you are willing to make terms, I will make myself at home."

He meant what he said. Mrs. Youngblood sent for Solomon Snare forthwith. That gentleman, for the first time in his existence, became aware that it was not Mr. Morecraft who was serving Richard Youngblood's sentence. He became also aware that Mr. Morehouse was decidedly a foeman worthy of his steel.

"Whatever happens, Mrs. Youngblood," he said, "remember this—under no circumstances do we give that blackguard one dollar, let alone a half million."

"But he says," protested Mrs. Youngblood, "that he will stay here until we do."

"Then let him stay," said Mr. Snare. "You come with me to Washington."

Two months later Mrs. Youngblood returned to her abode. The pseudo Morecraft was still on hand living on the fat of the land. There had been difficulties, as he assured Mrs. Youngblood; he had been unable to leave the house during the day-time, owing to the possibility of being seen, but he had made up for it during the long winter nights. He had entertained without and within—the Youngblood mansion bore witness to the latter; he had enjoyed himself to the limit; he intended to keep on.

"I can stand it as long as you can," he told the lady bluntly.

The lady was quite as blunt. "I cannot and I will not," she said, "stand it much longer."

"Then," he retorted, "you are ready to come to terms?"

"Decidedly not," she replied.

There was an assurance in her manner that puzzled him, but he felt he held the winning cards and he knew that he could play them when he chose. During the next few days his insolence overstepped all bounds.

"I've got you just where I want you," he sneered in Mrs. Youngblood's face. "There's only one way to get rid of me and you know it."

"I don't know it," replied Mrs. Youngblood, "because I am going to get rid of you right now."

"You're bluffing," he retorted. "You don't dare to show your hand."

"I will give you one chance," she said. "Will you take it. Will you go?"

"No," he replied.

"Very well," she said quietly, "I have done my best."

She touched a button and at the instant she touched it

her entire demeanor underwent a change. She sank into a chair and hid her face in her hands. Life and hope seemed suddenly to drop from her. She sat thus for a moment and then looked up.

Four men entered the door. One of them was Mr. Solomon Snare, the other three were men unknown to her, and yet, at the instant of his entrance, a glance of recognition —understanding—passed from Mr. Snare's eyes to hers. Snare turned to the three men with him.

"Gentlemen," he said, "there sits Mr. Richard Youngblood; he is your prisoner."

Mrs. Youngblood leaped to her feet, crossed to Mr. Morecraft, and clung to his arm.

"No, no, no," she wailed. "Don't take him away."

The three companions of Mr. Snare—secret service men they were—surrounded the little group. One of them—Crowder by name—clutched Mr. Morecraft with an iron grip.

"Mr. Youngblood," he said, in crisp business-like tones, "you have got to come with us."

"No, no," wailed the unhappy young wife of Richie Youngblood. "They must not take you, Richie. Offer them money, any amount, to let you go."

Mr. Morecraft looked at her in astonishment.

"I'm not Youngblood," he exclaimed.

She seemed suddenly to gasp—she seemed to take suddenly a hint to grasp at a straw.

"Yes, yes, that's right," she said; "he is not my husband. Don't take him, don't."

Mr. Snare carefully removed his glasses and carefully polished them.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I have been imposed upon as well as you. I could have sworn—I might have sworn," he corrected himself—"that the man who was taken out to Leavenworth was Richard Youngblood. I think anybody would have agreed with me, and yet——" He turned and on his own account pushed a button. A footman entered. "How long," said Mr. Snare to the footman, "has this been going on—how long has he been hiding in this house? You are being questioned by the law, in the presence of the law."

The footman trembled.

"For months, sir—months," he answered.

"That's enough," replied Mr. Snare.

"I tell you," broke out Morecraft, "I'm not Youngblood."

Crowder, of the Secret Service, tightened his grip.

"You're the living image of him, sir, and if you're not Youngblood, what are you doing in this house?"

"Why," returned Morecraft, "I——" He stopped.

"Go on," said Snare, "explain; if you're not Bloodgood, who are you, anyway?"

"Richie, Richie," sobbed Mrs. Youngblood, "just tell the truth—it will be better for you—nothing but the truth."

Crowder was very indignant.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself Mr. Youngblood," he exclaimed, "to put up a game like this—working off a double on the United States Government—when all your friends were working night and day to get you off. Even your young wife here."

"Yes," interposed Snare, "it was very foolish of you, Mr. Youngblood, to do a thing like that, particularly"—(He lowered his voice. "This," he said, "is not for publication, though the prisoner already has been released, as I am informed—in fact, he has been released and has disappeared from sight—but all this is in confidence)—particularly, Mr. Youngblood, since the President pardoned you last week."

Mrs. Youngblood regained her customary composure. Evidently the announcement was not news to her. Morecraft jerked himself from the clutch of the law.

"Pardoned," he exclaimed, snapping his fingers in Crowder's face; "then I'm free, free."

The sudden relief in his tone proved to his hearers beyond all question that he was really Mr. Richard Youngblood.

"You're free," said Crowder, "you're free, Mr. Youngblood, on the charge on which you were convicted, but not on the charge that you're going to be convicted—a much more serious offense—that of fooling the government You can do anything to the government and it will forgive you, but it won't stand being fooled."

A month later, on the deck of a white yacht moored at a crazy little wharf in a crazier little Montenegro town on the Adriatic Sea, there sat two people scrutinizing with marine glasses the crowd that issued from the local railway station. Suddenly one of the two leaped to his feet and waved a white handkerchief in the air.

"Here they come," he said.

The man who waved the handkerchief was Youngblood. The other person was his wife.

She nodded, also standing.

"Yes, and they see us, too," she said.

Leaning over the railing of the yacht they waited patiently while the crowd thinned and scattered until two lone figures came somewhat bashfully, somewhat uncertainly, down the long and rickety wharf. One of these two people was a man and the other was a woman.

Youngblood met them at the gangplank and held out his hand. "I sent for you," he exclaimed enthusiastically, "and it's mighty good of you to come."

"It's not mighty good of us to come," growled James Gurney, good naturedly, "for if you hadn't sent for us, I would have followed you all over the earth until I found you."

Without more ado, he drew up two camp chairs and waved everybody to sit down.

"Now, Mr. Youngblood," he exclaimed, "will you tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth to Mrs. Gurney here?"

Youngblood told it and all traces of doubt vanished from the face of Mrs. James Gurney. Gurney grinned.

"When are you going back, Mr. Youngblood?" he exclaimed.

Youngblood shrugged his shoulders. "I don't know and I don't care," he laughed, filling his lungs with the wine of the southern air, "not until it has blown over good and hard, at any rate."

Gurney grinned again. "It won't blow over for that chap Morecraft at Leavenworth for a good three years at least," he said.

Richie Youngblood waved his hand. "Don't worry me at all," said he. "That chap was bought and paid for. He deserves all that he gets."

Mrs. Youngblood clicked her teeth.

"I should think so," she exclaimed. "I should like to be the warden out at Leavenworth for just one week."

"To set him free?" asked Gurney.

"To get even with him," she returned.

"Moving Picture Stories," No. 308, contains an article entitled "HOW TO BECOME A MOVIE ACTOR." Buy a copy. Price 7 cents; postage free.

HARRY E. WOLFF, 166 W. 23rd St., N. Y.

"THE THIRD ACT"

By CECILE DE CHARTRAIN.

"THIS is my answer," whispered the taller man tensely, as flashing death leaped from the revolver he had whipped from his pocket. "And this and this," he reiterated savagely as his strong, nervous fingers tensed on the trigger. The leering smile died away on the other's lips. He moaned, clutched his side desperately, tottered and fell heavily in a crumbled heap.

"You've gotten what you deserved at last, Simon Maires."

He knelt down beside the prostrate body and, grasping Maires roughly by the shoulder, pulled him over on the side. He felt vainly for a heartbeat.

"Dead," he muttered in a far-away, quavering tone, "dead! God, have I come to this? Murder—I must get away; they're on the stairs—the windows!"

He ran to the window, flung it open, threw the pistol beside the corpse, then vaulted over the sill into the silent night beyond.

* * * * * *

For an instant there was a stillness far more eloquent than the most blatant acclaim. Then, as the reawakened lights dissolved the weird shadows and the falling curtain snapped the spell in twain, a resounding wave of applause swept the house from mezzanine to topmost gallery and back again with ever-increasing volume. It was magnificent, stupendous! An unparalleled triumph of dramatic and histrionic art! And Roy Mitchell, suddenly transformed from a death-dealing avenger into a most popular actor, realized that the supreme efforts he had exerted in that last powerful scene were fully appreciated. It was the first night. The producer rubbed his fat hands together in a relaxation of joyful relief and basked in a vision of crisp greenbacks flowing through the box office wicket in a sempiternal stream. Slowly the noise dwindled into the conventional hum and buzz of conversation, which in turn was drowned by a sonorous crash of chords from which the orchestra glided into the dreamy mazes of a waltz.

Behind the curtain all was disorderly confusion. The chaos of houses and trees and what-not besides began to resolve itself into definite conformation under the goading tongue of the stage manager. Then two of the shifters discovered Ronald, who had played the rôle of the villain Maires, still lying where he had fallen at the close of the last act. His absence had been commented upon as he had not responded to any of the many calls made for him, but it was supposed that he had returned to his room. Concluding that he had fainted under the stress of acting, they carried him to the nearest dressing-room, which happened to be that of the star, Helen Maveroe.

"What is the matter?" she inquired as she caught sight of the burden they were holding.

"This fellow must have fainted. We found him just where he fell in the last act."

"My God, it's Ronald! Tell me the truth. Is he dead?" Her face clouded with apprehension. The men exchanged glances of amazement.

"Put him on the chaise longue," she went on nervously before either had opportunity to reply, "and please bring me some fresh water."

Marie, the maid, acting in accordance with her mistress's directions, laved his forehead and chafed his wrists. But the hard painted face did not relax the horrible grimace that made it not unlike a grotesque mask.

"Feel for his heart, Marie. See if it is beating."

When the maid opened his coat a red stain was visible on his white vest. She shrank back in horror.

"Blood, blood!" she shrieked. "Madam, look!"

"Oh, my God, he's shot! Roy, Roy, why did you do it? I told you——"

The maid caught her as she fell. The others of the company, aroused by the noise, came rushing in.

"What's the trouble here?" the producer bellowed, his face purple with anger. "The orchestra has played its repertoire three times over and no Maveroe and no Mitchell."

"Monsieur is shot, dead I think. Madam has fainted," the overwrought Marie explained as she held the smelling salts to Helen's delicate nostrils.

"Shot dead? And who did it?"

One glance was enough to satisfy the astonished producer, and he called the nearest doctor and the police.

"How did it happen? Was it an accident?" he asked the bewildered Marie.

"He was found like that on the stage where he fell in the last act."

"Then Mitchell—where is Mitchell?"

Nobody knew and he could not be found. He had vanished without leaving a trace. The police and coroner arrived and took charge of the situation. It was while they were pursuing their investigation that Helen revived. Her face distorted almost beyond human expression, her raven hair immeshed in the wrinkled lace of her collar, her eyes glittering insanely, she sprang to her feet and stood over that painted face that grinned back so demoniacally.

There was an ominous silence broken only by the ticking of the little ormolu clock on the dresser. It was ill fitted for such a tragic scene—this beautiful room with its chintz and bird's-eye maple.

And the woman whose sanctum murder had invaded and profaned cried in her despair:

"Oh, my God, what shall I do? Why did you do it, Roy? And he was my husband, that wretch."

She wrung her soft white hands in an agony of dread.

"Did he escape?" she asked of nobody in particular.

"Mitchell has disappeared completely," the inspector in charge assured her compassionately.

Wonderingly, she viewed the press of faces which curiosity had rendered pitiless. Her relief at the confirmation of Mitchell's escape was apparent.

"Is that man your husband?" the inspector asked her.

"Yes, Douglas Ronald was my husband."

A perceptible movement stirred the onlookers. So Ronald was her husband. The murder was beginning to reveal secrets that her most intimate friends did not share.

Names were jotted down and the group was dispersed. A disappointed audience had been informed that owing to the sudden illness of one of the cast the last act would not be produced.

All unaware, hundreds of people had witnessed a most fiendish murder and had actually applauded vigorously. The murderer had coolly smiled and bowed his appreciation and had vanished into the air. It was amazing! One of the affairs that might well happen every day but never does. Glaring red letters blared the fact that the motive was very plain. Was not Helen Maveroe the dead man's wife? And had he not refused to divorce her without dragging her plea through the courts? Had not Ronald and Mitchell waged a daily wordy battle over Miss Maveroe? It was now common knowledge that on the very afternoon of the tragedy Mitchell had been heard to declare that he would kill Ronald for some remarks the latter had made about the beautiful actress. And even Helen herself had woven the net tighter when she had dramatically reproached the absent Mitchell for the crime. Extra after extra exhausted the life histories of the participants and reveled in dissertations on Mitchell's cunning. No one stopped to consider that it was a very strange way to commit a murder, and one man who had mentioned the possibility of an accident was almost attacked. As usual the public did not relish the thought of being cheated out of such an interesting problem.

The next day Helen had a visitor in the person of Inspector Graham, who was in charge of the investigation. She found him surveying with evident pleasure the priceless objets d'art and curious bijous with which the reception room was literally covered.

"You have a beautiful place," he told her.

"It is rather nice," she admitted, waving him gracefully to a comfortable chair.

"My business here, Miss Maveroe, as you are well aware, is in connection with that most unfortunate affair. I wish to have it understood that I am here not alone in my official capacity, but, if you will allow me to say so, as a friend. You must tell me everything you know about the murder. Do you understand me?"

"Mr. Graham," she replied with indescribable charm, "I am glad to be assured of your friendship, for if any woman ever needed sympathy I am that woman. I married Ronald in a fit of infatuation. When I found out the kind of man he was, cruel and brutish beyond all imagination, I left him. That is nearly two years ago. Since that time I have been compelled to work in the same company with him, and he has constantly forced his unwelcome attentions on me. It became necessary for me to have a protector against his abuse, and Mitchell supplied that place. The man Mitchell shot was unworthy to live and I am glad that he is dead. But now my life is wrecked."

Her head drooped and the tears streamed down her cheeks. Even the detective, used to such scenes, was visibly affected. With a tremendous effort she controlled herself.

"There is one striking phase of this murder," the inspector said slowly, "that makes it almost impossible. If any one were to tell me that as intelligent a man as Mitchell would make acting real in such a way I would scoff at him. It is hardly natural to suppose that a man of such sporting instincts as Mitchell is known to have would commit such a cold-blooded crime. And in any case, when there was so great a margin for failure it was folly to attempt it. Suppose Ronald had not been killed outright. Is there any explanation that you can suggest?"

"Only that he was temporarily deranged; he could not have been sane," she said almost hopefully, seeing a loophole for her lover.

"Well, Miss Maveroe, I will not trespass on your kindness by pressing you with any more disagreeable questions. To my mind we are a long way from the logical order of things. It's too glaring, too spectacular. There may have been a motive for killing Ronald, but surely there was none for killing him in such a dangerous way—by dangerous I mean, of course, to the murderer—one doing the shooting. You can call on me at any time. Good-day."

Yes, that was it, a defense of temporary insanity. She had read of many such cases. A ray of light entered into her dark meditations. Sensing the presence of another in the room, she turned quickly and beheld Mitchell.

"Roy."

"Helen."

For a moment neither spoke. They looked at each other in silent pity. The romantic air castle of the future which they had built with moonlight and kisses and fervent protestations had tumbled down in ruins. Nothing is more pathetic than the striving for the elusive. Nothing remained but love. That would last forever.

"Roy," she said, striving to make her tremulous voice firm, "why did you do it?"

"I do not understand you," he replied, eyeing her with such a fixed gaze that she turned away.

"I suppose you are going to tell me next that it was I who killed Douglas Ronald?" he asked in an aggrieved tone. "It is enough to shoulder the burden without being deceived. I know all."

"Yes, yes," was all she could utter, so great was her fear that he was actually insane.

"And I am going to show you how much I love you by taking it upon myself," he went on. "I can't understand why you did it, but I love you and——"

"Let us understand each other," she ventured. "Why did you do it in such a way. He wasn't worth it."

"I do not think we are going to understand each other very well," he said rather coldly, "as you persist in assuming a course which surprises me. What were you doing in my room before the third act?"

"Before the third act?"

"Yes. I met you in the hallway as you came out the door. You looked at me as if I was a ghost and fled without a word. Then I did not understand; now I know. Why will you deny it, Helen."

"Roy, I cannot tell you why I was in that room. But it had nothing to do with the tragedy." He looked at her queerly and walked to the other side of the room. "How did you get here? We must be careful. They must not get you."

"Why this sudden solicitude?" he questioned cynically.

"Roy, you are not yourself," she said in reproach. "Was it an accident?" she interrogated suddenly.

"No," he replied very deliberately, "it was not an accident."

Suddenly he rose and left her without a word. She held out her arms in piteous appeal, but he disregarded them and was gone. Without a doubt he was insane. His strange conduct proved it conclusively. She was both glad and sorry.

An hour later the paper informed her that Roy Mitchell had given himself up and had made a complete confession. In an agony of despair she tore the hair from her head and then fell senseless with the newspaper clutched in her hand.

And Roy, sitting in his cell, gazed with heavy eyes into the gloomy shadows and murmured:

"It is for her. But why could she not tell me?"

That evening Inspector Graham visited Mitchell.

"Now, Mr. Mitchell," the inspector began, "I am not here to force any confidences, but if you will tell me everything you will get out of here much sooner. There are several phases in this affair that are hard to explain. Why did you after committing that murder hasten to the Firearms Depot, which is some distance from the theatre, and endeavor to purchase two revolvers and ammunition? The clerk in charge remembers you well. He says that you were in such a state of mind that he flatly refused to sell. Then, what is your next move? You wander about the streets and finally give yourself up. I give you credit for more sense than shooting a man before an audience; and I expect you to give me credit for not believing everything I hear or see."

"I have confessed to the murder of Douglas Ronald," Mitchell replied sullenly.

"I am perfectly well aware of that, but it means nothing whatever to me. From your actions after the shooting, I conclude that you did not know that Ronald had been shot and that your motive in fleeing so suddenly was a different one from what people think. Am I right?"

"I've confessed," Mitchell repeated stubbornly.

"Men have done more than that for a pretty woman," the detective said sagely, "and especially when it is so easy to take the blame. It looks like a sure case against you. You can hardly plead insanity or accident. Neither would work. Here is my explanation: Somebody changed the blanks in your revolver just before your call. You knew nothing about it until you read in the papers what had happened. But then you remembered seeing a certain lady glide from your room just at the crucial time. Some one else saw her besides yourself, and I possess the signed testimony to that effect. Most chivalric, to be sure, but fortunately for you the law is not founded on such a Quixotic basis."

Mitchell looked his despair. Slowly the net was tightening about Helen and soon the claws of that dreaded law would close upon her. In vain he had attempted to make the supreme sacrifice for her. The astute inspector had explained the situation exactly. But somehow the reflection that the beautiful Helen had deliberately planned such a diabolical murder revolted him. It was impossible. True, every circumstance stood against her. And yet with his mind relieved somewhat of the strain that had been oppressing him, he knew that she had not done it.

Putting bullets in another's pistol and thus making him a slayer. It was horrible, fiendish. He could not recall of ever having heard of a similar case.

"Is Miss Maveroe guilty?" he asked.

"Time alone will tell," the inspector replied. "In the meantime I think I may say no. There is something under the surface that still baffles us. We are not content with mere circumstantial proof. Rest assured that she will suffer no harm. I must go. Keep comfortable and don't worry."

The inspector went directly to Helen's apartment.

"Miss Maveroe," he said jokingly, but eyeing her closely, "your name has been suggested as a possible candidate for the position of murderer. What have you to say?"

"I do not understand you," she answered.

He was so certain of her complete innocence that he laid before her his theory of the substitution of the bullets.

"Then he is innocent." Her voice rang out triumphantly, her eyes flashed in vindication. "And he is suffering in prison because he thinks I did it."

"Not quite that, Miss Maveroe," the detective said, "but you will admit that even now the evidence against you is very strong. Only my impressions upon which I always rely tell me that you had nothing to do with it."

"But can't we find out who really did it?"

"That is why I am here. Behind all the confusion and circumstantial evidence there is a master hand that with one stroke sought to wipe out the life of Ronald and ruin you and Mitchell. Can you recollect any person who would have such an interest or can you suggest any one who was desirous of killing Ronald?"

"I cannot, but there were probably many who might have done it," she replied.

"Well, here is my plan: You were Ronald's wife and his property is yours. Were I to search his property and rooms at the present time it is possible that the guilty one would discover me and escape. While the public thinks that Mitchell is the murderer, the real culprit will have no fear. But if you make a visit to view what is yours no one will suspect the real motive. Be sure that you examine everything that will throw any light on it. Read all his letters. Search his clothing. Be watchful for secret drawers in the furniture—anything that will help us."

"I will do it," she agreed.

The next morning found Helen Maveroe at Ronald's apartment. While her own rooms were luxurious beyond the ordinary, the splendor which met her eyes here almost dazzled her. Treasures from the Indies vied with masterpieces from Persia and Japan. Cushioned ottomans and tabourets, whatnots laden with exquisite trifles, oriental tapestries and brocaded hangings, paintings and statuary that would have made a collector envious; all together created an ensemble and grandeur which bespoke the artist soul of the dissolute man who had met such a tragic end.

For a moment she paused and drunk in the magnificent scene with avid eyes. The curious twist of a chair or the artistic angle of a table recalled with startling vividness the dead man who had regarded her as only one among his possessions of art. For an instant her thoughts were bitter, but she found relief in the work that lay before her and began a systematic search for anything that might throw light on the mystery.

Table drawers, closets and cupboards revealed nothing but the artistic salmagundi which might be expected in the quarters of a man of his temperament. Mandolins and guitars, risque novels, salacious pictures, innumerable photographs of beauties in alluring poses, wrinkled play manuscripts, were thrown together in confused heaps. The task of unearthing this matter was so interesting that time passed quickly, and after several hours she had accomplished nothing further than the establishment of what she already suspected that the character of Ronald had not been of the best.

Every nook and cranny had been searched with the exception of his writing desk, which she had left until last, knowing that she would be fatigued and it would be restful to finish the quest seated. The pigeonholes were crammed with letters, most of which proved to be missives from the sweethearts he had had. Only the resolution to delve to the bottom and leave no stone unturned held her to her task as she read these disgusting letters. Some lauded him; others reproached him. Some hailed him as a prince of bon vivants; others cursed him for his ruthless violations of girlish trust. Many of the women who had penned these scented epistles might have been instruments in causing his death, but none stood out above the others. Some of the despondent ones declared they would kill themselves; few threatened him.

Still reading, she made the discovery that he was a ruined man and that the very chair on which she was sitting would go on the block to pay his debts. The last letters were of a tenor which indicated that he was growing morose and cynical.

And then her straying fingers chanced upon a paper of white powder and a small vial of purplish liquid hidden behind some books. She smelled the liquid and ventured to put a few grains of the powder upon the tip of her tongue. Although she had never used drugs, she felt instinctively that both were some form of narcotic. She placed them carefully in her handbag in order that her suspicions might be verified.

It was growing dark and she was preparing to take her departure when a key scraped in the lock of the outer door and soft footsteps sounded on the thick carpet. A little circle of light played on the floor and from behind the Japanese screen where she had taken refuge she could discern that the intruder was tall and well dressed. He moved cautiously to the fireplace, evidencing by his movements a familiarity with the room. Throwing the light of the electric torch he carried on the mosaic work of the mantelpiece, he pressed a hidden spring and a small door opened.

He took a long envelope from the cupboard, scanned it and placed it in his pocket. A door banged shut in the corridor and he tiptoed through the other room to the entrance, where he listened intently. He had left a small parcel on the table and Helen resolutely crept along the floor and reached for it. Here without doubt was the solution to the mystery. The package was heavy and a quick glance showed her that it contained a revolver. But the strangest thing about it was that the gun bore Mitchell's initials and was to all appearances the same weapon that he had used in the play. Her excitement led her to forget that she was not alone, and suddenly she felt herself seized in a strong grasp.

He gripped her by the throat and had half strangled her when a battering on the door caused him to relinquish his hold and climb out the window. An instant later the panels burst, and Graham and an officer sprang into the room. Gasping, she pointed to the window, and the officer followed, leaving Graham to attend the woman.

"I arrived just in time," Graham said when she had recovered sufficiently to talk. "You are a brave woman and Mitchell is a fortunate man."

An examination of the papers in the man's coat, for he had left it behind in Helen's grasp, showed him to be Louis Rene, a Frenchman of doubtful reputation who had been Ronald's valet.

"I think we have found the real murderer at last," the detective assured her confidently.

An examination of the duplicate pistol confirmed his suspicions.

"Very cleverly conceived," he told her. "He simply exchanged the two, and of course it was a much quicker and safer method than extracting the blanks and loading with bullets would have been."

Try as they might, they could not locate the spring that operated the mechanism of the hidden closet, and growing impatient, Graham broke through with a hammer, to find it empty. The mystery was apparently solved, and they had nothing more to do than find the man, Rene. Without doubt he had come thither to hide the evidence of the crime in a place of whose existence only his dead master and himself were aware.

"What did you discover?" the detective asked her.

"Only that Ronald was penniless and that he was very despondent."

She handed him the vial and packet which she had found.

"Drugs beyond a shadow of a doubt. These discoveries are most significant and bear out the results of my own investigations. He was utterly ruined and had been for some time a drug addict of the worst type. Do those two things suggest anything to you?"

"No."

"Probably Ronald had some hold on his valet, and the latter killed him for that reason. There are several suppositions, but the main thing is to get Rene."

Weeks passed by without result, and Helen Maveroe had become a frequenter of Bohemian quarters in the hope that she might ferret out the hiding place of Rene. One night her heart leaped as she recognized the man who had attacked her. He came over to the table where she was sitting and took a chair opposite her. She decided to stake all and play a bold game.

"I have seen you here often," he said gallantly, "and you are as like a showgirl or a musician as a rose is like a cabbage. Tell me, what are you?"

"An artist," she replied graciously.

"Then you do belong to the kingdom of Bohemia?"

"Why not?" she asked flippantly, gayly lighting the cigarette he offered her.

She had been informed that Rene was a trafficker in drugs and she resolved to take advantage of this knowledge to work her point.

"How about a little 'dope'?" she inquired.

"Easier said than done, but if you will go with me, I'll see that you get all you want."

The man was not unprepossessing, and she was not afraid of him, so she willingly signified her acquiescence.

She accompanied him to a house near by which had a very forbidding aspect, but was almost palatial on the inside. She suspected not without reason that it might be here that some of the drug orgies she had heard of had taken place.

Her companion left her in a sumptuously furnished drawing-room and told her he would return with the drug in a few moments. She drew her gun carefully and hid it in a fold of her dress.

"Throw up your hands," she cried as he stepped into the room. "You are wanted for the murder of Douglas Ronald."

He looked at her and laughed and then threw himself nonchalantly into a chair, still shaking with mirth.

"Put up your gun, woman," he said. "I know you don't want to shoot me or any one else. Besides, I don't believe you could shoot straight. I could draw a pistol and shoot six times before you could pull the trigger once."

The force of his magnetic eyes compelled her to lower the weapon, and taking it gently from her hand he placed it on the table.

"The gun is where you can reach it if you really want it. Now I'm going to tell you something. I do believe if it was any one else intruding upon me in this way I wouldn't do it, but you're plucky and, well, rather amusing. I'm not half as bad as you think I am. I never killed anybody and never intend to. All I want is a little money, and sometimes the police are dreadfully in the way."

"Didn't you change those revolvers?" she asked.

"No, I did not."

"Who did?"

"Can't you guess?"

"No."

"Douglas Ronald himself." He enjoyed the start the news gave her.

"But why should he do it. It's ridiculous."

"He was dying from an overdose of drugs, and knew that he had not more than twenty-four hours to live. He resolved in his frenzy to avenge himself both on you and on Mitchell. He had a duplicate gun made, and then it was an easy matter for him to change them. It took only an instant. In case the shots did not touch him, he knew that attempted murder might be preferred against Mitchell, and the slightest wound in his condition would have killed him."

"But supposing Mitchell did not leave the room."

"I called him on the telephone on a pretext. Ronald ordered me to do so, but I didn't know why."

"But the gun; how did you get it?"

"Ronald put it in a mailing case he had waiting and threw it into the mailbox outside the theatre. It reached me the next day. I didn't know what to make of it until I found his letter in the secret closet the other day. He had a slip of paper attached to the gun, telling me to look in the closet. I thought it would be a good place to put the weapon, as the initials on it made me suspicious."

"How did you learn all this if you knew nothing of his intentions?"

"Read," he told her, handing her a manuscript.

It was a carefully worded affair in Ronald's handwriting and specified that what was divulged therein was to be sent to a newspaper on the day following the execution of Mitchell for the murder. It explained that the writer hated his wife and Mitchell and took this means of revenging himself. If Mitchell's sentence was mitigated to imprisonment the manuscript was to be held until Rene's death and then published. Ronald stated that in any case he would not live more than a day and that any wound would cause death. He expressed the hope that a shot would kill him outright.

The conclusion was as follows:

"I realize that drugs have driven me insane, and already the poison is drawing my life to a close. I wish to die in a spectacular way, and at the same time inflict a terrible revenge upon those whom I hate. Even were I not about to die the pleasure of revenge would be worth it. I have conceived this means as the most fiendish I can devise. I conjure Rene, who is to hold this, not to publish it before the specified time under pain of my spirit haunting him."

"Won't you give me this?" she pleaded. "Think what it means to me—life, everythingg."

"No," he replied, smiling. "I cannot give it to you, for I would not violate the trust of even that wretch, as bad as you think of me; but if you force me to give it up, that is quite another thing."

He gave a quizzical glance at the pistol lying on the table.

Helen smiled. He was far different than she had imagined. She took the gun in her hand and pointed it at him.

"If you do not allow me to take this away with me, I will have to shoot you," she said with a smile that belied the seriousness of her words.

"Oh, if that's the case, as I don't care to be shot, you can have it. But remember that I am resisting. To tell the truth, I'm mighty glad to be rid of it."

"I won't forget it."

"I shall always remember that I had the pleasure of acting with one of our greatest stars. But, Miss Maveroe, you are too beautiful to disguise yourself. I knew you the moment I saw you this evening. Won't you forgive me for choking you the other day. I was very much excited."

"I would forgive you anything. You have made me a happy woman again, and you may be assured that the police will never get from my lips any information about you or this house."

"You have given me what I dared not ask."

He shook her hand warmly.

He kissed her forehead tenderly.

"I had a sister once," he said. "Good-by, and good luck to you."

The next morning Graham informed Mitchell that he was free.

"Then she's confessed?" the latter asked in alarm.

"Yes, for love of you," he was told, and then he was shown the last testament of Ronald, which filled him with astonishment and anger.

"Roy."

"Helen."

Free from the fears that had galled them, they both were bright and happy once more.

"But where did you go that dreadful night when you left so suddenly?"

"I went out to buy two revolvers and ammunition. I was mad with anger. Ronald kept goading me with remarks about you until I felt my senses leave me, and a great rage take possession of my soul. No doubt he did it so as to pull the net tighter around me. If ever there was a demon he was one. But the clerk in the store refused to sell me the guns, and I wandred about until I heard what the newsboys were shouting, and then I wandered until finally I landed here. I meant to hand Ronald one revolver and take the other and have it over with. The thought of breaking up the performance never entered my head. I even forgot who I was."

"Then what he meant to injure us probably saved us, as it prevented you from doing him harm. It was all for the best."

"Yes," he said soberly. "I believe that if we could look into the future we would never be dissatisfied with the way things happen."

They smiled joyously at each other. Now they had a future.

"And you naughty girl, what were you doing in my dressing-room?"

"I sent a messenger boy to the theatre to get what I put there. It has been closed and nothing has been disturbed."

The boy just then arrived and handed her a small rolled piece of paper. She handed it in turn to Mitchell. As he read it a smile overspread his features.

This is what he read:

DEAREST ROY:

If you find this note which I am hiding on the mantel let it assure you that I do love you devotedly and will elope with you as you asked me to do. I am leaving it entirely to chance, as I do not know the best course.

Wondering whether you will ever find this,

HELEN.

"I have found it at last," he said, "and you."

"No," she replied softly as their lips met, "I have given it to you with myself."

STICKS AND STONES

BY GEORGE KINNELL

CHAPTER ONE

"GOOD-MORNING, Jump," said the chief, grinning broadly at the tall, melancholy-looking man who entered the office. The greeting was sourly acknowledged by Wellington Jump—"Joyful" Jump to his associates at Police Headquarters—as he slumped dejectedly into the most convenient chair.

"Well," chuckled the chief, "now that you have brought to a successful conclusion the Barton business, I suppose you're eager and ready to start on some fresh perplexity? And, by the bye"—he was speaking in an elaborately matter-of-fact tone of voice particularly adapted to annoy his listener—"that case wasn't by any chance your long-waited-for 'big mystery,' was it?" His solicitude was rewarded by an angry glare from the detective and again his mustache twitched as he struggled to control the laugh which rose in his throat.

It may be well to explain that Detective Jump, although one of the cleverest in the city, had peculiarities which had always been sources of amusement to his fellows. Of Southern parentage, he was naturally possessed of a temperament—something rarely found in a New York policeman—and his appointment to the force had been the realization of a boyhood ambition. He had come into the department with a head full of weird theories founded upon the exploits of famous fiction detectives, and even after he had been shown that Sherlock Holmes methods were rarely used and that the super-criminal did not exist, he still clung obstinately to one last fancy of his youth. Some day he would orate to any one willing to listen, there would come a big case—and back of it a big criminal. There would come a mystery that was a mystery; an "once-in-a-hundred-years" crime that would give him, Wellington Jump, the opportunity to prove the correctness of a thousand theories of scientific criminology.

Time and again, in the past, he had been assigned to cases having all the ear-marks of romantically great mysteries. Into each he had thrown himself, enthusiastically believing that the big chance had come, only to find them, when solved, to be sordidly commonplace.

On this particular morning as he sat looking at his laughing chief, his thoughts went back to his last case—the "Barton business." This had been the matter of an old lady, a recluse, who had reported the loss of several thousand dollars in government bonds. Jump had been given the case and had immediately declared it to be the work of a "master-criminal." Against the advice of more sober heads he had shadowed a perfectly innocent and honest gentleman and on the evening previous a telegram had brought him back from Philadelphia, a decidedly crestfallen detective. The message had read, "Cease operations. Mrs. Barton insane. Never possessed bond."

"No," he said disgustedly, in answer to his chief's question, "it wasn't the great case, but you needn't be so jovial about it. Some day you'll be up against something that you nor no one else in the department will be able to grasp, and then will come my turn to laugh. Why——"

"All right. All right," said the chief, smiling. "Good luck to you." Then, in a more serious manner, he continued, "It's very possible, Jump, that we are up against just such a case now. It's no 'Barton business,' but a real robbery; and because your peculiar talents seem to fit you for it, I intend placing you in charge of operations. The robbery took place last night, and to prepare you for what is to follow I'll give you an outline of the matter."

The detective listened distrustfully as the chief began, but gradually, as the story progressed, he sat up straighter in his chair and a new sparkle came to his eyes.

"Last night," the chief was saying, "Amy, the daughter of old 'Soft Coal' Groton, entertained a certain Lieut. Bray at her box at the opera. It appears that of all her suitors this Bray is the most favored, for one reason, because Miss Groton wore her diamonds—the real ones—instead of the duplicate set of paste which she uses on most occasions. The jeweller has informed us that yesterday was the first time, since the beginning of the operatic season, that the genuine stones have left his safe. According to all our information this Bray is a very decent sort of young chap; comes from a good family and all that sort of thing, and the medals he wears on his chest more than offset the effect of the limp and the cane which he acquired in France.

"Mrs. Groton, Amy's mother, chaperoned the young couple, and during the last part of the performance the party was joined by one Alfred Manoire, an eccentric French composer who, in the past few months, has become quite a figure in society. Because of the fact that Miss Groton and the lieutenant had not seen one another for several years, I don't suppose the Frenchman's presence was entirely welcome. But at any rate he stayed until just before the final curtain, when Miss Groton discovered that her necklace, the king-piece of the set, and worth a small fortune, was missing.

"O'Connell was on the scene five minutes after the theft was discovered, and after making as thorough an investigation as was possible under the circumstances, pronounced the case to be one of the most remarkable he has ever known.

"The Groton box is what is known as a 'stage box,' because it is nearly on a level with and only a few feet from the stage. The next box, several feet above the stage box, was empty. It is impossible for any one to reach into the box from the orchestra without standing upon one of the seats, which method obviously could not have been employed. In fact, we can safely disregard, for the present, any theory that has to do with the removing of the jewels in any way but from the interior of the box itself. Jackson, the theatre's detective, who is a retired policeman with a splendid record, and absolutely above suspicions, was stationed in a passage back of the boxes and swears that no one entered the passage but the four occupants of the box—Mrs. Groton, Amy, Lieut. Bray and the Frenchman.

"All other channels being blocked, we come to the box

itself. O'Connell, after his first survey of the matter, immediately suggested that the two men be searched. This Mrs. Groton and Amy at first refused to allow, but upon the insistence of the lieutenant, who is plainly suspicious of Manoire, permitted the search to be made. O'Connell did a thorough job but found nothing. Of course, the two men were not detained, but both are being constantly watched, and I expect reports before noon."

"Have Miss Groton or her mother any suggestions to offer?" asked the detective.

"No. They seem very much upset over the loss and will offer no assistance. It seems to me that they are guarding against our gaining knowledge of something which they fear to disclose. I don't for a minute imagine that there is anything 'queer' about the robbery because the Grotons are certainly not the people to attempt an insurance fraud. Just what they are holding out I don't know. That's your part of the game."

"How were the four seated?"

"Mrs. Groton sat in front of her daughter and the soldier. The latter was at Miss Groton's left, and when the composer entered he took up a position at her other side. It would have been possible, during periods when the theater was darkened, for either of the men to have cut and removed the necklace. This, however, could only have been done very quickly and with great dexterity, and the theory, like the others, is more or less of a stone wall, because on neither of the men was found any instrument that could possibly have been used to cut a heavy platinum chain. All in all, it looks as though one of the two men is an extremely clever thief, although you may be able to uncover some method by which the robbery was accomplished from the outside. You are to begin your operations at once. O'Connell will tell you anything further you may wish to know."

CHAPTER TWO

AFTER Jump had gotten the views of O'Connell he proceeded directly to the Groton home. When he had stated his mission he was ushered into a magnificently appointed room and was shortly joined by Miss Groton. A few minutes later her mother entered, and while the usual preliminaries were being made, Jump took the opportunity of studying the two women.

Mrs. Groton appeared to be a woman of strong moral character, and still possessed of some of the beauty which, in her youth, had made her a metropolitan belle. This same beauty was reflected in the face of her daughter, and Jump marvelled as he thought of old Hiram Groton, the father, who was perilously near being the homeliest man in New York. Both had that bearing so often described as "regal," and both seemed worn and worried. The detective sensed the great love which existed between mother and daughter just as he sensed Mrs. Groton's veiled hostility toward himself; and he determined to be as politic as possible in his questioning of the younger woman. In his present position, he thought to himself, their confidences would be well worth listening to, could he but elicit them. But his hopes in this direction were soon shattered.

With a cordial frankness he turned to Miss Groton and asked if, while at the jeweler's on the previous afternoon, she had noticed any one or anything suspicious, intending the question as a "feeler" to lead up to what he considered more important topics. But, simple a query as it was, it had a surprisingg, if momentary, effect.

Miss Groton bit her lip and turned with a helpless little gesture toward her mother, who flashed her a meaning look. At this the younger woman regained something of her composure and answered bravely enough:

"No," she said. "I'm not in the habit of paying more than passing attention to the people around me, especially in the shops."

The coldness of her answer showed Jump that he had blundered, consequently he determined to dispense with subterfuge.

"Well," he asked, "can you give me any clue at all? As you have more or less intimate knowledge of Lieut. Bray and Mons. Manoire, can you not tell me which of the two you think would be more likely to have stolen your jewels?"

"I positively do not think that either of them is guilty. Lieut. Bray I have known for years and hold in high esteem. Mons. Manoire, on the other hand, I have known but a short time, although there has never been any doubt that he is other than a sincere and idealistic artist. I hardly thought that the two men for whom we showed our entire trust by giving the freedom of our home would be suspected and hounded by the New York police. To my mind there is utterly no reason for such procedure, and I hope you will realize that you are wasting time and expend your efforts in some other direction. Rest assured that your robber, if there is one, was not my guest on last evening."

"'If there is one!'" echoed Jump in amazement. "Then you think it possible that the stones may only be lost; that they may yet be found in some obscure nook of the theater?"

"Why," said Miss Groton, again visibly distressed by the detective's questions, "I don't say that—I hardly know what to say. The loss of my necklace has been such a shock to me that I am incapable of thinking clearly. It has made me ill and unhappy"—her lips were trembling and the tears seemed starting in her eyes—"and I hope you will excuse me." And she passed rapidly out of the room.

The conversation had been so unexpectedly dramatic that Jump stared for several minutes at the door through which she had vanished before he turned to Mrs. Groton, who was watching him with worried eyes.

"Mrs. Groton," he said bluntly, "as matters stand now, the finger of suspicion is wavering above the heads of the two men who were your guests last evening. I fully realize that it is difficult for you to entertain any such thoughts about those you believe to be your friends, but, under the circumstances, we must be more sensible than sentimental. Will you please tell me all you know about Lieut. Bray and Mons. Manoire."

The old lady seemed drawn between two minds. She hesitated for a moment, and then, carefully weighing her words, made reply.

"Mr. Jump," she said, "as you have seen, your questions have distressed my daughter, and I don't intend that they shall distress me. You should realize that after such a night as was last night, no woman living would be in a position to think clearly. It is especially annoying when we know that we can give you no information which you could not obtain elsewhere. I hope that you will understand that we know no more than the detective who was present at the theatre, and that in the future, unless there is something of importance to re-

port, you will respect our natural desire to be left entirely out of the matter. Good-day, sir."

The detective was smiling wryly to himself as he left the house, and made his way to the nearest public telephone booth, where he called the best known jeweler in New York and asked for the manager. Upon getting this gentleman, he spoke a code word and then asked: "Can you recollect anything out of the ordinary connected with Miss Amy Groton's removal of her jewels on yesterday afternoon?"

"Yes," came the answer. "One of our clerks remarked an amusing incident. As Miss Groton entered the store a young army lieutenant, who was purchasing a cane, became very flustered and asked if he could hide behind the show case. He later gave the laughing explanation that he and Miss Groton were to meet for the first time in three years on that evening, and that it seemed a shame to spoil the long-looked-for moment by so casual a meeting as would take place in the store. The clerk said that the real reason was that he had not shaved that morning and had on an old service uniform.

"That is the only interesting incident that I can recall. Is there anything special you wish to know?"

"No," answered Jump. "That helps me considerably." And ignoring the jeweler's inquisitive questions, thanked him and hung up the receiver. He then boarded a downtown trolley, and as he rode he turned the facts and his theories, such as he had formed, over and over again in his mind. Time and again he said to himself: "Poor Lieut. Bray." And then, as he thought of Amy Groton changed it to "Lucky Lieut. Bray."

The former phrase was proven literally correct when, after an hour spent in and out of offices in the vicinity of Wall Street, he found himself possessed of some startling information.

Lieut. Bray, he found, had never been very wealthy, and after speculating unwisely, was now entirely dependent upon his salary from the government. This source of income, pitifully small to a man used to every luxury, would also soon be cut off, and all in all, the detective thought, unless he had some unknown revenue, the lieutenant was in a very poor condition to enter the lists as a suitor for the hand of the daughter of "Soft Coal" Groton.

CHAPTER THREE

TO a man of Detective Jump's imagination, the atmosphere of a theater sans music, audience and actors, was particularly depressing. Consequently he wore an expression of more than usual sadness as he walked through the dark and deserted opera house.

He had returned uptown after learning the condition of Lieut. Bray's finances and was now about to view the scene of the mysterious robbery.

The stage box, with its chairs and hangings left untouched since the evening before, he found a place of particular fascination. As he stood in the center of the box taking a preliminary observation, he wondered what his investigation would bring. Would he find that which would bring more misery to the Grotons? Would he find that the theft had been committed from outside the box; that the criminal, the great criminal with whom he had so often dreamed of matching wits, had been at work? Would it mark the beginning of a chase that would set the whole world talking? Or, and he shook himself impatiently, would he find nothing? Too often had he worked himself up to excited anticipation by just such thoughts as these, only to make his disappointment more acute when his investigation proved unsuccessful. So, with a sigh, he began his search.

He used his own peculiar methods, which were neither careless not systematic. He worked with his eyes rather than with his hands, and kept his mind open for impression rather than for concrete clues. Corners were poked in. Chairs were overturned and draperies shaken. Carpets were lifted and the box viewed from every conceivable angle, but all to no avail. Finally, when he had nearly concluded that it would be useless to search further, a low exclamation escaped him.

He had noticed that the edge of the box was covered with velvet, the heavy nap of which effectively concealed a narrow space between the stage box and the one next it. Into this he shoved an investigative hand, and after skinning his knuckles and blackening his soul with oaths, drew forth a cane.

It proved to be of the crooked-handle variety, made of staunch ash, and bearing, enameled upon a silver band near the top, the emblem of the division with which Lieut. Bray had fought in France.

He did not seem as delighted as might have been expected over the discovery of so important a clue. On the contrary, his face wore an expression of positive unhappiness as he sat down and gingerly turned his find around and around in his hands. At last, with a shrug, he went about the task of examining it. Beginning at one end, he worked to the top, subjecting it to a series of short, sharp taps. He removed the ferule and twisted the handle, but found the stick as sound as a new dollar. Satisfied, he took another look into the crevice between the boxes and dropped back into his chair.

For perhaps half an hour he sat there, moodily piecing together the threads of fact and possibility, and then, as he saw a ray of light through the maze of mystery, he uttered an exclamation of delight and made his way out of the theatre.

Ten minutes later he was outside the building in which Lieut. Bray maintained an apartment. In a doorway opposite he found Moore, the detective to watch Bray, and after a short conversation, the two made their way to the door of Bray's apartment.

Moore, carrying the cane which Jump had found at the theatre, took up a position around a turn in the hall, as Jump rang the bell.

The lieutenant himself answered the ring, and after Jump had introduced himself and asked for a few minutes' interview, bid the detective enter. He led the way to the diminutive "parlor," and when they were seated Jump, after his usual manner, abruptly asked to be shown the lieutenant's cane.

If he expected the soldier to be dismayed by the request he was mistaken, for, without a change of expression, Bray went to a closet in the bedroom and returned with a cane which was in every respect the duplicate of the one which Moore was now guarding in the hall outside.

Jump took the stick and gave it the same examination as he had the other, only this time results were different.

When he tried the tapping treatment, he found that the lower part, near the ferule, gave out a different sound from the rest of the cane, and then, upon closer examination, discovered that the ferule was fastened so securely with some sort of cement as to thwart his strongest efforts to remove it.

Closely followed by the interested lieutenant, he went to the bathroom, where hot water soon loosened the cement, and as he slowly lifted the ferule, he watched the expression on the other's face.

Bray was plainly excited and intensely interested, but there was absolutely no trace of fear in his face. He seemed not to realize that the discovery of the doctored cane might put him in a peculiar position and that the detective's next move, which would disclose the contents of the cane, might make him, in the eyes of the world, a dishonorable destroyer of confidences and the lowest kind of a thief.

Not knowing just why, the detective felt strangely pleased at the absence of guilt in Bray's face, and as he led the way back to the parlor he experienced a sensation very much like contentment.

After removing a wad of cotton which had been plunged into the hollow end of the cane, he dumped upon the table, first, a small pair of tempered steel wire cutters, and then, in a flash of fire that seemed like a blazing stream from the cane to the table, one of the most beautiful diamond necklaces he had ever seen.

For a few minutes the two men stared with fascinated eyes at what looked, against the background of polished mahogany, for all the world like some fantastical jeweled reptile coiled in sleep.

Bray was the first to recover. Into his eyes there came an expression of dawning realization as he saw what all this meant to him. In a dazed sort of way he looked at the detective as if expecting to hear himself accused of stealing the jewels of the girl he loved. Before Jump, who was sorrowfully returning the lieutenant's look of understanding, could speak, there came a ring at the door.

"Wait," whispered Jump as Bray started forward.

With the puzzled lieutenant watching, Jump plugged the cotton back into the cane and replaced the ferule. Then, slipping the necklace and the cutters into his pocket, he walked without a sound into the bedroom and put the cane back into the closet.

"Quick," he said as there came another and more insistent ring. "Open the door and act as if you were alone. I will be in the bathroom watching. It is a long chance, but if your visitor is who I think it is—do as I say."

With his ear glued to the crack of the bathroom door, Jump listened as the lieutenant greeted the newcomer.

"Ah," he heard a high-pitched, excited voice say, "it is good that I have found you at home. All day have I tried to remove myself from that pig of a detective, who always I find at my heels, but until now has he been like the wolves of Russia. Is it not horrible, my dear Bray? Have you suffered as I have?"

"Oh, yes," came the laughing reply. "I've been out only once to-day, and I noticed then that some chap stuck pretty close to me. But what difference does it make? You should forget you're being followed."

"'Forget!' That is easy for you to say, but, then, you have no artistic temperament. Me, I could kill with my hands the dog of a spy. Already has my heart started skipping as the doctor warned, should I become excited." He coughed and continued in a gasping voice: "Please, will you fix for me my medicine? Put one of these capsules into a glass of very hot water. If the water is not hot enough, please let it run until it is so."

"Leave the door on a crack," whispered Jump as Bray entered the bathroom. The lieutenant did so, and then, obeying the detective's motioned command, went noisily about the preparation of the Frenchman's capsule.

"Look," said the detective suddenly.

Leaving the water running, Bray placed his eye to the door and gasped.

The Frenchman, with little regard for his "skipping heart," had glided noiselessly to the bedroom closet and was saturating the end of the cane with liquid from a small bottle. He seemed rather surprised at the ease with which he removed the ferule, and the lieutenant laughed aloud at the expression on his face as he abstracted the cotton and savagely shook the cane.

At the sound of Bray's laugh, the Frenchman whirled, and drawing an automatic, advanced and pulled open the bathroom door.

"So," he snarled. "You think to fool me, eh? Well, you had better——" He got no further.

Jump, who in stepping to one side had passed unnoticed by the enraged Frenchman, brought the butt of his own gun down upon the other's hand, with the result that the automatic went spinning across the floor.

The fight that followed was soon over. By the time Moore, who had been in the hall listening, arrived on the scene, the Frenchman was securely handcuffed, and was calling down imprecations upon the heads of Bray and Jump. These two, however, in their delight over the speedy lifting of the baneful cloud which had hung over Bray, paid little heed.

"I have a disagreeable task for you," Jump was saying to Bray, in mock seriousness. "I want you to get Miss Groton and her mother, bring them to headquarters and wait there for me."

"I fly," laughed Bray, and came very near doing just that as he left the apartment.

When he had left, Jump stepped to the phone, and gloomily impervious to scowls of the prisoner and the congratulations of Moore, called headquarters. Then to the chief he announced that he had arrested Alfred Manoire for the robbery of Amy Groton's jewels, and asked that the wagon be sent to take them all downtown.

CHAPTER FOUR

IT was a happy group that greeted Jump when he entered the chief's office after having seen Manoire safely in a cell.

Mrs. Groton and Amy were alternately laughing and crying and painfully embarrassing the lieutenant by thanking him for the part he played in the recovery of the necklace. The chief, delighted with the manner in which the case had been completed, arose and stretched forth a hand to the detective.

"Congratulations," he said, glancing at the clock. "It is exactly nine hours since you left this office. You have done a wonderful day's work—wonderful. Even if you did have to take an hour overtime to do it in."

"Thanks," said Jump shortly, ignoring the chief's quib. He was again his old gloomy self and quickly stopped any expressions of gratitude or apology from the women. Instead, he withdrew from his pocket the necklace and asked Amy if she could identify it.

"Do you think I could mistake them?" she answered, caressing the flashing gems. Then, with a radiant smile, "Won't you please tell us the inside facts of the case."

For all his sourness, Jump was far from being resistent to the coaxing of a beautiful girl. "I suppose it would be the proper thing," he said with a slight smile.

"By all means do so then," said Mrs. Groton.

"We-ell," said Jump, apparently at a loss to start. "When the chief first gave me the facts I naturally had no suspicions—and my visit to the Groton home brought me no nearer a solution."

At this, Amy, now thoroughly ashamed of the doubts she had entertained regarding Lieut. Bray, shot the detective a glance full of grateful appreciation of his delicacy. She now realized how poorly she had acted during the morning's interview, and how easily the detective must have read her thoughts.

Jump smiled at her, reassuringly, and continued his narrative. He omitted his visit to Wall Street, and passed directly to the subject of his discovery at the theatre.

"When the cane came up from behind the box," he said laughingly, "my heart went down. From the very beginning I refused to consider Lieut. Bray as the possible thief, and attempted, rather, to prove that Manoire or some outsider was guilty."

"Why?" asked Amy.

"Because I couldn't conceive of an American disgracing the uniform in which and for which he had shed his blood. Had Lieut. Bray been in mufti, I most assuredly would have classed him, equally with Manoire, as the possible thief. But under the circumstances I found it impossible.

"When I found the cane I couldn't, at first, see how it was to affect the case, although the very fact that the lieutenant was the only one who carried a cane made me, for a moment, fear that my trust had been misplaced. O'Connell had told me, however, that the lieutenant carried his cane out with him, and that complicated matters. I still refused to believe Lieut. Bray guilty, so I sat there mentally trying to link the two canes to Manoire.

Finally, like a thunderbolt, came a theory, so plausible that I determined to work it out. As you see, that theory has proven absolutely correct.

"Manoire, like any other criminal, likes to brag, and on the way downtown he forgot his animosity toward me and explained just how he intended accomplishing the robbery.

"He admitted that his rôle of eccentric pianist was only a ruse to gain entrance to fashionable homes. He is, of course, a very clever player, but he found it easier to achieve his purpose by breaking every musical rule. He says that society, not understanding the discord, liked it."

Mrs. Groton, remembering his own enthusiasm at Manoire's playing, sniffed.

"Although he was soon familiar with the interiors of rich houses he had no idea of becoming house breaker. He bided his time until yesterday when Miss Groton presented him with an opportunity nearly as good as the one he had hoped to find. He had spent more time than he had intended, and was, to an extent, desperate. Otherwise, I doubt very much if he would have attempted even this.

"He saw you, Miss Groton, as you left the jeweler's, and he also saw Lieut. Bray come out with his new cane. He realized that you had not met, and——"

"Were you in the store?" asked Miss Groton, turning to Bray in surprise.

"Yes," answered the lieutenant, who explained his actions in a stammering way unbecoming an officer, but very pleasant to a young gentleman in love.

"Manoire had heard gossip about you two," continued Jump when Bray had finished his explanation, "and also knew of the proposed box party. He put two and two together and decided upon a daring plan. He purchased a cane similar to the lieutenant's and bored a hole under the ferule long enough to accommodate the necklace and the cutters. Thus prepared, he presented himself at the theatre in the evening. Although uninvited, he knew that his reputation for eccentricity would cause his unconventionality in remaining to be overlooked.

"He also realized that if any one saw him check his coat and hat and retain his stick it would be remarked. Therefore, he concealed the cane up the back of his 'swallow-tail,' until he came to the entrance to the box. There he hesitated until Jackson, the house detective, had his back turned, and then he slipped the cane under the hangings, unnoticed by any of you.

"The rest was easy. When the opportunity presented itself he cut the necklace, dropped it, along with the cutters, into the cane at his side, stuffed in the cotton, which was to prevent rattling, slipped from his pocket the ferule, all prepared with cement, placed it in position, and then substituted the cane for Bray's, which was standing against the edge of the box at his back. Bray's cane he dropped into the crevice, which he had noticed on the occasion of some previous visit to the theatre, and the position of which he had mentally pigeon-holed for future reference."

"I don't quite see his reason for letting Lieut. Bray walk off with the jewels," interrupted Miss Groton.

"His reason was two-fold," explained Jump. "In the first place, if a man in evening dress carried a cane into a box it would, in the event of a robbery, be very carefully examined. On the other hand, carried by a lame soldier, a cane would be perfectly proper and would be given no more special examination than would be given the clothing.

"Then again, if the jewels were discovered, he could disclaim any knowledge of them. In such a case, the cane being Bray's, the owner would naturally be accused.

"Manoire knew that Bray, in the excitement, would hardly notice any difference in the weight of the cane, and he had sufficient confidence in his workmanship to believe that the ferule would not come loose.

"My only fear, then, was that Manoire had reached Bray's home before me, and had gotten the jewels. As it happened, I was lucky, and in consequence, Miss Groton has her jewels back, and I have the honor of the arrest—if honor it could be called."

Lieut. Bray and the ladies left very shortly, and Jump and the chief sat facing each other. Their positions were exactly the same as in the morning, and their expressions nearly so.

"What is it now?" asked the chief. "If that wasn't a romantic case, I never want to see one."

Jump grudgingly admitted that it had been very romantic.

"And," continued the chief, "if you didn't make successful use of more theories and deductions than anybody I ever heard of, outside of a book, I want to know."

The detective also admitted that his theories and deductions had been rather good.

"And the criminal," insisted the chief. "Tell me one fiction character that could beat him. Regular Raffles, that's what he was."

"Raffles, hell!" said "Joyful" Jump as he started for the door. "He used to be a waiter in a Brooklyn rotisserie."

THE LADY WITH THE KEY

By JOHN WISE

JACK MATHEWS, a young New Yorker of gentlemanly appearance, whose casual acquaintances supposed he had nothing in the world to do but amuse himself, was in the habit of walking on West 23d Street almost every pleasant afternoon. Thus he came to notice a woman who soon became for him an object of interest and curiosity.

The first time he saw the lady in question she was walking slowly along West 23d Street, between Broadway and Sixth Avenue, and even before he looked upon her dark, handsome face, her fine, stately figure caught his eyes and held them.

She was young and had about her an indescribable air of refinement which stamped her as a lady of culture. Her attire was very plain but neat, and Mathews observed almost at once that she wore one rather singular ornament, if indeed such an incongruous or unsuitable object was intended as such. This was a large, odd-shaped iron key, and it was suspended outside her coat by a string of narrow, black velvet which encircled her throat.

Attracted by her beauty, as well as by an expression of peculiar watchfulness, for which he could divine no reason, Mathews followed and observed her for some time. He saw her walk up and down West 23d Street between Broadway and Sixth Avenue many times that afternoon, never once pausing to look into the richly dressed windows which seemed to possess an irresistible fascination for other women. Always her great dark eyes eagerly, searchingly sought the face of every man she passed, but never glanced at a woman. From time to time she nervously felt the key of singular design as if she sought thus to assure herself of its safety. Then, too, he observed it was evidently her desire always to keep the key in plain sight; for when occasionally the wind blew her feather boa over it, she quickly thrust it aside.

Mathews' curiosity grew apace, but at last the lady boarded a car bound eastward and at that time he thought of her no more.

But this was only the beginning of his knowledge of "the lady with the key," as he designated her, for the want of another name.

After this Mathews saw the same young lady on the same street almost every day, and always, day after day, her conduct was precisely the same, but he fancied her face was growing paler, and that the expression of anxiety deepened in her dark eyes.

But he found no opportunity to address her, or to obtain the slightest knowledge of the motive which inspired her singular conduct. And he never thought of attempting to trace her from 23d Street. Such a thing would have been repugnant to him, with only the promptmgs of idle curiosity for an incentive. But, if he did not acknowledge it to himself, sentiments superior to those of curiosity were at work in his heart. His sympathy was awakened and perhaps something more.

One night Mathews was alone in his apartment in a "furnished rooms" house uptown poring over an official looking letter, with an evident concentration which showed deep interest. As he read the perusal was punctuated by his exclamations of surprise.

This is what he read:—

"I am authorized to inform you that we have reliable information at our department that an obscure electrician of your city, whose name is unknown to us, has about perfected a new development in the application of electricity—which has made it possible to bore through the thickest bank vault and the strongest safe silently, and in a time the extent of which is but little more than appreciable. Believing this newly discovered appliance is meant to be put to illegal use, we are anxious to suppress it. Such a thing would imperil the United States treasury vaults, and banks everywhere would be insecure. This department therefore instructs you to try to discover the author of the aforesaid invention, and if successful to open negotiations, in behalf of the government, for the purchase of the dangerous invention and the final suppression of the secret of its use."

Mathews was pondering upon the surprising contents of the letter when there came a tap at the door, and having put the important missive in his desk, he admitted a youngish man whose pale, thoughtful face and long unkempt hair suggested the conventional ideal of the student.

Not long since this man and two companions had taken two connecting rooms across the hall from Mathews apartment, which, by the way, was on the second floor.

And, though he had never exchanged a word with either of his present caller's two friends, who avoided him as well as all the other inmates of the house, he had come to know Paul Wesson, who now stood before him. At first theirs was a mere speaking acquaintance when they chanced to meet on the stair or in the hallway. Later, Wesson fell into the habit of dropping in to chat with Mathews, but the latter had noted he came to his room only when both his two friends were out. Mathews found that Wesson was a man who had read and thought much, and that his conversation was entertaining save only when he came to converse upon political and social topics. The views which he then advanced were entirely incompatible with Mathews' opinions. Early in their acquaintance it had become evident to him that Wesson's ideas had been warped by disappointment, poverty, and the conviction that the world had treated him badly, until he surveyed all mankind through prejudiced eyes and believed the existing conditions of society were radically wrong. Indeed, his opinions were highly socialistic and anarchical. And sometimes Mathews thought his mind had become somewhat unbalanced by mental overwork.

He had told Mathews he was engaged in writing a scientific work, which required a great deal of study and research.

"Have a seat, and make yourself at home," said Mathews cheerfully, as Wesson came in.

"Thank you, the others are out, and as I feel a little lonely, I thought I'd drop in for a little while. There's a meeting of the Equality Club to-night, and Ludwig and

Wentze have gone there," answered Wesson, taking an easy chair.

"I am tired of the talk at the club. It's all talk and nothing done. The rich grow richer, and the poor poorer. Conditions which enable one man to become a multi-millionaire, while countless thousands of his fellow-men are starving, remain unchanged. Is there no power which can reach the hoarded gold of the rich and distribute it for the benefit of suffering humanity?" he went on, his eyes flashing with excitement.

Mathews thought of the letter which he had just read and thought what a dangerous thing the new electrical appliance would be in the hands of such a man. But he made haste to change the conversation.

"I think you confine yourself too closely to your work, for I have never known you to leave the house since you have been here—two weekks now," said Mathews presently.

Wesson glanced at him sharply.

"You are wrong; I go out every day," he answered, somewhat testily.

They continued talking until footsteps sounded on the stairs.

"That's Ludwig coming home; I must go. By the way, oblige me by not mentioning to either Ludwig or Wentze that we are friends; that I come to talk with you," said Wesson, springing up and silently slipping out of the room.

His strange request surprised Mathews. But thoughts about the work which the letter in his desk called upon him to undertake banished all other reflections directly.

That night, seated at his window, he saw Ludwig and Wentze go out. And a little later, as he stood in the hall, drawing on his gloves, he heard a strange sound which came from the rear one of the connecting rooms occupied by Paul Wesson and his two friends.

It was unmistakably the noise made by a strangling man, frantically struggling for breath. Mathews believed Wesson was alone in his room, and he did not hesitate an instant. The door yielded under his hand. He threw it open and sprang into the apartment. There, upon the floor, lay Wesson, purple in the face, his mouth frothing, his eyes starting from his head. It was evident he had fallen in a fit of some kind. Mathews opened his shirt at the throat, raised his head, and presently Wesson began to breathe freely.

Just then Mathews' eyes fell upon an object at Wesson's side, where it seemed he might have dropped it when the fit seized him. It was an odd-shaped iron key, and a glance showed him it was an exact duplicate of the one which the lady whom he had so often watched on 23d Street always wore suspended from her throat.

But Wesson opened his eyes and then quickly staggered up, as Mathews made this astonishing discovery. He was still staring at the key, wide eyed, when Wesson saw it, and instantly snatched it up and dropped it in his pocket.

He looked at Mathews in a frightened way, but said thickly: "You helped me. I had a fit. I am subject to such attacks. I thank you very much, but I shall do very well now."

But Mathews did not mean to be gotten rid of thus easily, and he did not take the hint to go.

"A strange shaped key that, which you just picked up; not an ordinary trunk or door key, I'm sure," he said.

"No; merely a souvenir, merely a souvenir, that's all," Wesson answered, while his eyes kept darting covert glances at a closed closet door.

It was evident that if this man held the clue to the mystery of the lady with the key he would keep it to himself, and so, after advising him to consult a doctor without delay, Mathews went out. But he had seen the telltale glances which Wesson directed at the closet door, and, going into his own apartment, the thought that he might thus gain some information which might prove of service to the lady with the key, impelled him to soon stealthily retrace his steps to the door of the room from which he had just come. He carried a chair with him, and standing upon it, he looked into the apartment through the transom over the door.

Then he saw Wesson in the closet. He was on his knees before a large iron chest. He had the key, of singular design, in the lock. As Mathews looked he turned it and opened the door of the closet, but it was so dark in the closet that Mathews was unable to see what the metal box contained. After looking eagerly, anxiously into the chest, as if to assure himself its contents was safe, Wesson closed and locked the door.

Mathews noiselessly reached his own room again. And now he congratulated himself that, at last, he had a good excuse for speaking to the lady with the key. He would tell her where he had seen the duplicate of the key which she wore and which he was sure was an important factor in the mystery which seemed to surround her.

He hastened to 23d Street, and he had just turned the corner of Sixth Avenue when he came face to face with the beautiful woman, who was now always uppermost in his thoughts.

He raised his hat and said:

"Pardon me for addressing you as a stranger, but I wish to speak with you about the odd-shaped key which you wear."

She started, flushed, and then paled, as she answered:

"Walk beside me. Tell me anything you can. But you are not the man who—but never mind that. About the key. Speak! Speak!"

She took his arm, and as they walked on he told her how he had seen the key, exactly like the one which she wore.

Trembling, she asked him to describe Wesson, and he did so.

"He is Edwin—my brother!" she cried out. "Oh, take me to him! I must save him—remove him at once, beyond the reach of those evil men who are his companions. As we go I will explain further."

Mathews hastened to call a cab. In it they were driven away. As the vehicle rattled on, the lady said:

"A month ago my brother locked up his little curiosity shop, on Eighteenth Street, at the usual evening hour, and walked away. From that night he has been as one dead to me and all his friends. He disappeared suddenly and mysteriously. I have employed every means at my command to trace him, but all in vain, and I have suffered all the suspense and anxiety which the fear which he had met with foul play could occasion me. I knew my brother had long been a close student of political and social economy, and that he had developed views upon those subjects of which I heartily disapproved. I was also aware that he had a rear room at his little shop fitted up with curious appliances, and that no one save himself was allowed to enter it. Curiously enough, for some months prior to his disappearance, my brother wore attached to his watch chain an iron key exactly like the one which I now wear.

"One night, some weeks since, at a late hour, I alighted alone from a cab before my house. The vehicle was at once driven away. The nearest street lamp was out, and there was no light in the house. As I crossed the pavement at the door a man dashed across the street. It was

so dark I could not see his face, and, of course, he could not see mine. I was afraid, and as I tried to unlock the door, I heard the man exclaim: 'This is the house!' And just then he caught sight of me. Bounding to my side, while I heard the sounds of several men running up the street toward us, he asked, panting for breath, 'Are you Josephine Edmonds?' I answered 'Yes.' Then he thrust the key, which I now wear, in my hand and added: 'You will know this key. Wear it where it can be seen, and every day walk on Twenty-third Street, between Broadway and Sixth Avenue, and as I've never seen your face, I'll know you by the key, and some day, if I escape the men who are now after me, I'll meet you and tell you of your brother's fate, but I cannot stay to explain now, and as I shall be watched, I shall never dare come here again!' With that he bounded away, and the men who were approaching darted by after him. I got into the house and as soon as I had a light, I saw the key was either the key which my brother had worn or one exactly like it. Every day since then I have walked on Twenty-third Street with the key in sight, hoping to meet the man who gave it me."

Just then the cab stopped before the house in which Mathews roomed. He handed the lady out, and entering, they went up to the door of the front one of the connecting rooms occupied by Wesson and his two companions. Mathews knocked, but there was no response, and no sound came from within. The door was locked, but Mathews produced a bunch of skeleton keys, the sight of which caused the lady to look at him with a surprised and suspicious glance, and with one of them he quickly unlocked the door, saying:

"I suspect that, in a closet within, we may find something to explain your brother's strange conduct."

They entered and passed through the first room to the rear one, and going to the closet there, Mathews found the door locked. At that instant he heard the voice of Ludwig and Wentze in the hall, at the outer door of the rear apartment. There was an alcove at the rear end of that room, screened by a heavy curtain. Mathews whisked the lady behind it and took his place at her side. Then into the room came Ludwig, Wentze and Wesson."

"Now to make the final test! Now to satisfy you that my great work has been successfully done!" cried Wesson in a tone of mental exultation, as he went to the closet door and unlocked it. Then, while the pair behind the curtain watched them through its folds, the trio dragged out of the closet the iron chest, and holding up the key, which was a duplicate of the one worn by the lady, Wesson cried out:

"Now to the demonstration! Now to show you the practical working of my great electrical appliance, which shall open the vaults of hoarded wealth, which, with you as the chosen disciples of a new commune, I shall distribute to alleviate the sufferings of oppressed and downtrodden humanity!"

He quickly unlocked the iron box and Mathews watched him with feverish interest, as he took out a coil of wire, a carbon stick, a large sponge, and a coverless iron box, the size of a collar box.

The house was lighted with electricity and the main wire crossed the ceiling of the room. To this, in order to get the power needed for his experiment, Wesson attached his coil of wire at the central point of it. Then he fastened one end of the wire to the carbon stick and "grounded" the other end by twisting it around the handle of the closet door. Upon the carbon he then fixed a small piece of wood, to be used as a handle. The small iron box had a hole in the bottom. Around the box Wesson looped a string, which he secured to the knob of the chest door, so the box hung downward with its coverless top resting against the chest's side. Then he put the stick of carbon through the hole in the box, and pushed it against the side of the chest. With a little key, where the wire joined the stick, he turned the electric current on, as he exclaimed:

"This chest is as strong as the strongest safe! It is made of six plates of five-ply, drill-proof steel!"

Instantly, with the application of the electric current, molten metal began to flow down the side of the chest. A part of it was caught by the box. The rest fell upon the great sponge which Wesson had soaked with water at a faucet in the room. The carbon was eating its way into the very heart of the iron, and in three minutes Wesson withdrew the box, and thrusting his hand through a hole, pierced clear through the walls of steel, he drew out a bundle of papers.

"Bravo!" shouted Ludwig and Wentze in unison. "To-night we'll get the millions from the M——— Bank," added Wentze, and he winked knowingly at Ludwig.

"And then, Wesson, you will be the hero of the new commune, and suffering thousands will bless your name as the gold from the bank brings them plenty and happiness," he grinned at Wentze behind the back of the poor, mad electrician, whose mania he sought to foster and encourage.

"Now to get the plan of the bank!" he added, stepping to the curtain and throwing it aside. He beheld Mathews and the lady. Mathews was entirely unarmed. Uttering a furious cry, Ludwig recoiled and whipped out a dagger. Wentze produced a like weapon.

"They have stolen the secret! They must die!" cried Ludwig.

Wesson stood like one stunned, as the two desperate men sprang at Mathews and his sister.

"Brother, save me!" she screamed, while Mathews placed himself before her. Then the mad electrician made a tremendous leap between the imperiled couple, and the two desperate Germans, carrying the end of the wire by the insulated handle. In their mad rush the two men crashed against this "live wire" charged with the full current from the main wire on the ceiling. Down they fell, stricken with death.

A moment later two men, whom Mathews knew to be prominent city detectives, came in through the door which he had left unlocked. Looking at the dead men, they stated the two were desperate bank burglars, who were badly wanted in Berlin, and for whom they had been looking for some time. An agent of theirs had located the Germans at that house, and the officers had just come to arrest them.

That evening Mathews wrote his department that he had found the inventor of the electric appliance for boring bank safes and that he had been committed to an asylum as hopelessly insane. Also, that the dangerous appliance had been destroyed, and that the only persons who knew the secret, save himself, and one other whom he could trust, were dead.

To this day neither Miss Edmonds nor Mathews have learned anything further regarding the man who brought the lady her brother's key.

Recently a Chicago newspaper published a full account of an electrical appliance exactly like the one perfected by Miss Edmonds' brother, so probably he had revealed the secret to some person unknown to Mathews.

To-day Mathews is a successful officer of the "U. S. Secret Service department," as he was indeed when he first met "the lady with the key," who is now his wife.

THE SUSPECT

By JEAN O'BRIEN

TONY LOCKETT got the greatest shock of his life when a hand was laid on his shoulder and a man's voice said, with an air of authority, "You're under arrest."

"What?" Tony gasped.

"Come on," said another man at the shop-door. "Don't try to play the innocent; you can't put it over on us."

They were in a little east-side candy and tobacco shop where Tony "hung out" frequently.

"What did I do?" Tony asked stupidly.

"You know well enough," said the man with a threatening air now; "that little girl you killed."

"Little girl? Killed?" Tony repeated, dazed.

"Yes, killed; we've been after the guy that did it for two weeks, and you're the one; come on."

"But—I can't go," said Tony foolishly, unable to realize his situation, "I—I got a date—with my girl."

The officer laughed and said, "You got a date in jail—for some time, too; no more nights out for you for six months."

The other added: "Say, I guess it'll be the electric chair for yours; better learn to pray, if you forgot how."

Tony started; what in the name of God was happening to him? They must be mistaken, but what could he say?

The two plied him with questions on the way, until he thought he must be going mad; asked him didn't he take cocaine?

"Gee," said Tony, innocently, "how did you know that? I only 'tried it' twice—took just a sniff or two, from a fellow on First Avenue."

"Only once or twice; that's what they all say," was the remark of one officer, and the other laughed.

"I guess you had the stuff more than once or twice—you must have been full o' dope when you killed that kid——"

"Say," Tony protested, "I never killed—a cat; I never did no harm to anyone—but meself."

"Oh," one of the men remarked, "you might be all right except when you take the stuff; but when you do take it, you don't know what you're doing."

"No," said the other, "that's how you got into trouble; I suppose you hardly remember about it now, but you did it while you were doped; it's fierce to be a 'cokie.'"

Tony felt a shiver of fear run down his spine and a cold sweat rise upon his skin; he could not speak for a minute; could it be that in those two trials of the drug he had forgotten everything and become—a criminal? He sensed the most terrible anguish a human being can ever know—the terror of the very worst in himself; at last he spoke again. "What kid was it?"

"Why, it was in all the papers," he was told. "Little Gertie Wilde—only three years old; she was found in the hallway of her own house, stabbed to death; you're pretty young to be as bad as all that—God knows."

"But why should I, why should any one—kill a child?"

"Oh, because crime is often a pleasure to a coke fiend."

Tony became almost tearful, and when he spoke again his voice trembled. "I only took it—twice."

"Oh, can that stuff; any one can see you're a coke fiend."

Tony was silent, and walked on to his destination—prison.

There again he was questioned, questioned, questioned; he wondered what he had ever done to be so badgered; questioned about his family, were any of them ever arrested? Tony thought it was rather easy to be arrested, if people were poor; yes, he told them honestly, his brother was "pulled in" when he was fourteen for stealing coal; they were all freezing at home then—it was in the winter; his mother had been arrested, too, for stealing a coat for him when he was about three.

He heard one man mutter something about a "criminal family," and another said to Tony, "You were all a bad lot, I guess."

Then he was asked how long he had been taking cocaine? Once more he said that he had only "tried it twice." Some one swore at him, called him a damned liar, said he had been a "dope fiend" for years; another said, "He hangs out with a criminal gang; don't you hang out with the 'Battlers?'" Before he could reply his questioner seized him by the throat, and shook the under-sized, poorly nourished fellow like a puppy.

Still, there was fire enough in Tony to make him defend himself as best he could, and he replied to the question, "No, I don't," and glanced defiance at the bully.

He was thrown into a chair and his questioner said, "You liar; don't you know Red Murray and Tom the Rat?"

"Yes; but I don't belong to any gang."

"Like hell you don't; we know all about you; this is not the first dirty job you did," and here followed a string of shameful epithets, some of which Tony did not know, had never heard before.

Some one hurled a dazing question at him: "Where were you on May twenty-third at nine o'clock at night?"

"I—don't remember," said Tony.

"Weren't you in the hall of 400 East ——— Street?"

"No; I don't think I was ever in that house."

"Shut up; we have witnesses that saw you; people that know you well; what d'you think of that?"

"They must be mistaken, that's all."

"You've been out of work—haven't you?"

"Yes; for a week only."

"Doping; you had nothing to do, but think of crime; why don't you work, anyhow?"

"I do, but I had a fight with the boss because he wanted me to work like a horse."

"Sure; you're always fightin' with your bosses, you've left a dozen places in about two years—ain't that true?"

"Well, if I don't like them, I gotta right to change?"

"Here, now, don't get fresh; where'd you borrow the knife you used?"

"What knife?"

"The knife you killed Gertie Wilde with."

"I never saw Gertie Wilde; I don't know the house, even."

"Shut up; did you throw that knife away?"

"I never had any knife, except a penknife."

"Say, what d'you want to lie like that for? We know where you got the knife; we know all about you, and you

might as well confess; if you tell the whole truth, you might escape the chair; ain't it worth while confessin', to save yourself?"

"I have nothing to confess."

A big fist was shaking in front of Tony's face, and a gigantic officer said thunderously: "You damned rat, we have witnesses that saw you commit the crime, and you'll get no rest until you admit it."

Terror seized Tony's mind; he was singularly childish in some ways, despite his twenty-one years; his only acuteness had been developed in efforts to support himself since he was twelve, when he began by selling papers. He began to believe now that he had done this terrible thing; if he had, then it was 'good-by' to Mazie Mead; that was all that troubled him—losing her.

For hours after they questioned him and would not let him sleep when he said he was very tired; then, when they did let him sleep, one officer wakened him with a violent shake, and, grasping him by the throat, said menacingly: "Say you killed her—or I'll shake the life out of you—you beast."

Tony said: "For God's sake let me alone; think what you like; I killed her—there; let me sleep." They went away and locked the cell-door, the clang of the iron was ominous—but at least he could sleep now, and he did.

He arose in the morning resigned; they knew he was a murderer; they had witnesses, and—he had only "tried" cocaine twice; could it do all that harm so quickly? Well, it must have, for he could not remember any crime.

When some officers arrived and began to upbraid him again he was defiant. "I won't answer any more questions," he said. "If I have to die, all right; it's my funeral; just let me alone, for I can't tell you what I don't know."

During the day his mother came; she looked the picture of tragic despair; she looked, he shuddered to observe it, as if she believed him guilty; she had been told he was a cocaine fiend, and that drug-addicts did not always know what they were doing.

"I wish I could do something for you, Tony," she said, helplessly. "If there's anything you want that I can get——"

"No, I don't want nothin'," Tony told her, thinking, "I only want some one to believe in me."

He felt much depressed when his brother Lou arrived, and he felt almost like crying when Lou said, "You didn't do it, did you? Tell me the truth."

"They say I did," said Tony doggedly; "and what they say goes; you know me long enough; what do you think?"

"Well, how do I know? Did I know you were a 'cokie'? But if you ever did anything so bad as this——"

"You think I did it, hey?"

"Well, if you didn't you can prove it."

"Maybe I can't, if everyone's against me——"

"Well, why don't you tell where you were that night?"

"I don't know; I don't remember; it's over two weeks ago; I couldn't be sure."

"But some one else might remember."

"They might; but no one's goin' to mix themselves up in this—for me—they're all poor people, and I'm poor, and nobody cares; it's a great world all right; just as well I'm goin'."

"Why don't you say you didn't do it?"

"What good will that do? You think I did, mom thinks I did, they, the police, think I did—I guess I'm on my way to Calvary all right; what I think makes no difference."

"Gee," said Lou, "it's fierce." The tears came to his eyes; it was his brother, he reflected, even if he did commit a crime; and anyhow a "cokie" wasn't exactly responsible. "Do you need anything, Tony?" he asked, shakily.

"No, you better go; I'll be all right."

After Lou had departed he heard footsteps outside again, and the attendant handed in a note, calling out loudly enough for several people to hear, "A letter for you, Jack the Ripper."

Tony shuddered; then he heard a kind of awful chorus, growling—it made him think of the wild beasts in the menagerie; and he heard a beating, too, of hands on the iron doors of cells; soon he realized this was a chorus of suppressed curses, a hymn of hate, directed against him; the terrible attendant laughed, as he looked at the boy's white face, and saw him trembling, and said, "Lucky for you you're locked up and they're locked up, or they'd tear you to pieces, and trample on you."

Tony, feeling weak and dizzy, sat down to read the note. He recognized the handwriting at once: Mazie, his girl; he read it eagerly and found it a draught of delight for his thirsty soul.

"DEAR TONY: I've been busy ever since I heard what trouble you're in, that's why you haven't seen me; I've been busy seeing if I could get help for you; before night there'll be some one to help you, so don't worry; I know it's all a mistake, Tony, and I don't believe any of the wicked things they're saying against you, I know you too well. Love.

"MAZIE."

Having read this, his despair fell away like a chain and he was free, in spite of the barred door before him, and the narrow cell; if she believed in him, he reasoned, he couldn't be a murderer; she must be right; she was always right.

Mazie worked in a minister's family, and had been there four years, since she was sixteen; the minister, a man of great influence, and as great kindness, regarded her as a young charge, to whom he owed more than money, so when Mazie told him of her lover's awful position, and showed him the boy's romantic and innocent love-letters, he decided to help; he called on a lawyer, a friend of his, and the latter promised to do all he could, without money; Mazie had furnished a list of Tony's former employers and some acquaintances, and the lawyer found much favorable information; but that would not be enough, of course.

Shortly after the lawyer called and saw Tony and still later the minister; and after these two celebrities had departed, there was a marked change in every attendant's manner; they were polite and remarked that things often looked bad when people were innocent, and that one never could tell, etc.

The influence of the lawyer and minister gave time—which was valuable—to interview friends and neighbors, and to visit the candy shops and "movie" theaters where Tony sometimes spent his time. Finally, the lawyer found the proprietor of a movie place who recognized a photo and furnished a description of Tony, and also of Mazie, and who recalled that they were both at his place on the very night the crime had been committed; he remembered them perfectly, because they were waiting for a companion who did not appear, and the proprietor being asked what time it was, took out his watch and told Tony, "Eight o'clock." Then Tony said to the girl, "Oh, let's go inside, he's not coming; he promised to be here at a quarter to eight." The proprietor's daughter went in with them, being particularly anxious to see one of the pictures shown that evening, and the proprietor relieved her, taking the admission price at the door.

At ten-thirty his daughter came out with Mazie and

Tony, with whom she had been chatting during the performance, and the three went up the block for sundaes, and left the confectioner's about eleven p. m.

This story appeared in the papers, and attention was called to the fact that the child had been discovered, dying, at nine, and Mazie reported that Tony called at the minister's house for her that evening, as she now recalled, at seven-thirty; the minister saw the two young people go out his basement door at a quarter to eight; he only recalled the incident now, because he had walked out and asked Mazie to get him fruit, saying she might bring it on her way home, when she informed him she was going to a moving picture theater, and would not be back until ten-thirty; she mentioned the subject of one of the pictures, and that was what afterward fixed the date in his mind.

The proprietor would have come forward with his story at once if he had known the suspect was the boy he had met that evening, but he did not know the boy's name, and the pictures in the newspapers did not resemble the prisoner, he said. Besides, the printed stories gave such an impression of hardened vice, that he felt certain the police had found a guilty person.

The day after these stories appeared a rather wild-looking and unkempt man rushed into a police station and said:

"You kin let that boy go; I killed little Gertie; I'm her uncle, and I thought my sister'd give me some o' the insurance when she got it; I wanted money to buy cocaine."

At first the detectives thought the man was hysterical and knew nothing about the crime, but he stuck to his story, and his sister testified that he had been a cocaine fiend for years, and often "acted crazy"; he had been away from home for several weeks, but admitted he had watched for the child, and killed her, and then run away, keeping out of his sister's way until the hue and cry should cease. A day after his arrest he became violently insane, and Tony—was free. The murderer was the very one who had induced Tony to "try" cocaine; he did not know the man's name, nor where he lived, and only met him twice.

BOOKS WITH ONLY RIGHT-HAND PAGES

WHY not print all books in such a way every page is a right hand page? asks D. I. Winslow of Boston, who claims a patent for his conception of how to do it. He holds that if one has to read pages on one side of a book only, this will be held more easily, the eyes will not wander, there will be no necessity for changing the position of head and neck when passing from one page to another. Thus reading, especially of big, heavy volumes, will be less fatiguing not only to the eyes, head and neck, but also to the arms and hands.

Mr. Winslow's idea is to print a book so that you read straight ahead from right hand page to right hand page, these being numbered consecutively; then, when you have read through to the last right hand page, you turn the book upside down and continue reading as before, what in ordinary books are left hand pages now being right hand pages. This of course, involves printing all left hand pages upside down and numbering them consecutively from the back of the book. This would easily be arranged by the printer in laying out the forms, though to get the pagination of a large book correctly would require some nice calculation on the printer's part.

THE MEDITERRANEAN IS WITHOUT TIDES

THE Mediterranean Sea, which is now a center point of interest, is commonly described as tideless, and the description is correct, at any rate at its eastern end. Navigators like Jonah and St. Paul knew nothing of tides. The word does not even occur in the Bible.

It was, no doubt, the amazement felt by ancient Greek mariners, accustomed to the even level of the tideless sea, at the sight of the tidal bore of the Seine at Rouen.

Science has discovered an explanation of the tides in the influence of the sun and moon. These, operating in the ratio of one to four, produce spring tides when pulling together and heaps when in opposition.

The tidal contrast at Southend and the mightiest effort of the Bristol Channel at Chepstow, in England, are alike dwarfed by the eccentricities of the Bay of Fundy, that cul de sac between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into which the Atlantic rushes with pent-up fury, giving rise to such effects as the bore at Moncton, the Reversible Falls at St. John and the lightning transformation of Windsor from a swamp to a deep-water harbor in the course of a few minutes. As, however, it is a harbor for only four hours and a swamp for twenty, the utility of Windsor is qualified.

Remarkable as are these expressions of the ocean to eyes unaccustomed to such freaks, it must be confessed that the tourist is certain to encounter disappointment if he expects too much. Thus the tides of the Bay of Fundy are absolutely unnoticeable on the steamers which cross from Digby to St. John.

The reversible falls at the latter port, seen immediately after high water from the suspension bridge overhead, are just worth the short drive from the city, but the much-advertised Moncton bore is a poor thing in the light of day, although, heard rather than seen at night the coming of the wave over the mud flats inspires an agreeable feeling of fear in those gathered on the little quay for the purpose. Its only rival is said to be in China, but from all accounts the Chinese bore is a far more formidable flood.

It is in virtually landlocked seas like the Baltic, Mediterranean and Euxine that one must look for absence of tides, explains the Washington *Star*, particularly in those portions remote from their outlet. At Stettin, Germany, Smyrna and Batoum there is no tide whatever. Even at Cannes the ebb is so feeble that a strong wind from the sea all but arrests it. This regular ebb and flow of tides must not be confused with the operations of currents, which from the Gulf Stream, the most considerable of them all, to the slightest drift on our coasts are due to very different influences.

Even from the Mediterranean and Black Seas very strong currents emanate. The currents off Gibraltar are by no means disregarded by sailors, and the pace of the Bosporus, opposite Candilli or Bebek, suggests a mill race and calls for the greatest caution in navigating boats.

Those who live on the shores of the Baltic and Mediterranean have taken advantage of the absence of tides to erect all manner of fixed bathing places, thereby dispensing with the cumbersome and comfortless bathing machine which is moved to and fro on the foreshore.

THE SCIENCE OF FORTUNE-TELLING

PART NINE—CABALISTIC CALCULATIONS.

THIS is said to have been the invention of sage Pythagoras, whose doctrine was that everything in the universe was represented and governed by certain figures or numbers, to which he ascribed mysterious properties and virtues. According to him, everything from the Supreme Being himself, down to the minutest atom, was distinguished by its own proper number; and his belief was shared by numberless other philosophers. Without entering into any detail of this system, we will proceed to describe how these calculations are made. An alphabetical table must be first prepared, with its corresponding numbers, thus:—

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S
10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
T	U	X	Y	Z	J	V	Hi	Hu
100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900

This is accompanied by a list of numbers, with their various interpretations and significations, as follows:—1. Passion, ambition, design. 2. Destruction, death, catastrophe. 3. Religion, destiny, the soul, charms. 4. Solidity, wisdom, power. 5. The stars, happiness, graces, marriage. 6. Perfection, labor. 7. Course of life, repose, liberty, perfect happiness. 8. Justice, preservation. 9. Imperfection, diminution, grief, pain, expectation. 10. Success, reason, future happiness. 11. Faults, punishment, discord, prevarication. 12. Good omen, a town, or city. 13. Impiety. 14. Sacrifice, purification. 15. Piety, selfculture. 16. Love, happiness, voluptuousness. 17. Misfortune, forgetfulness. 18. Hardening of the heart, misfortune. 19. Folly. 20. Austerity, sadness. 21. Mystery, wisdom, the creation. 22. A scourge, the divine vengeance. 23. Ignorance of the doctrines of Christianity. 24. A journey. 25. Intelligence, a birth. 26. Useful works. 27. Firmness, courage. 28. Love tokens. 29. Letters. 30. Fame, a wedding. 31. Love of glory, virtue. 32. Marriage. 33 Purity. 34. Suffering trouble of mind. 35. Health, harmony. 36. Genius, vast conception. 37. Domestic virtues, conjugal love. 38. Imperfection, avarice, envy. 39. Praise. 40. Fetes, wedding. 41. Ignominy. 42. A short and unhappy life, the tomb. 43. Religious ceremonies, a priest. 44. Power, pomp, monarchy. 45. Population. 46. Fertility. 47. Long and happy life. 48. Tribunal, judgment, judge. 49. Love of money. 50. Pardon, liberty. 60. Widowhood. 70. Initiated, science, the graces. 75. The world. 77. Pardon, repentance. 80. A cure. 81. An adept. 90. Blindness, error, affliction. 100. Divine favor. 120. Patriotism, praises. 200. Irresolution. 215. Calamity. 300. Safety, belief, faith, philosophy. 318. Divine messenger. 350. Hope, justice. 360. Home, society. 365. Astronomy. 400. Long and wearisome voyage. 490. Priests, theology. 500. Holiness. 600. Perfection. 666. A malicious person, machinations, plots, enemies. 700. Strength. 800. Empire. 900. War,, combats, struggles. 1000. Mercy. 1095. Taciturnity. 1260. Torments. 1390. Persecution.

Now write down the name of the person whose character you wish to learn, and beneath each letter composing it place the corresponding number. (Should the letter W be one of them, it must be represented by the two Vs, which will give you the number 1,400). Add them all together, and by comparing the product with the table of significations, you will discover what you wish to know. When the product exceeds the highest number given in the table, the first number is cut off, and the remaining alone used. We give an example, supposing the name to be Jean Jacques Rosseau:—

J	600	J	600	R	80
E	5	A	1	O	50
A	1	C	3	U	200
N	40	Q	70	S	90
	646	U	200	S	90
		E	5	E	5
		S	90	A	1
			969	U	200
					716

646 Jean.
969 Jacques.
716 Rousseau.

2331 Total.

Of this total of 2,331, we cut off the 2,000, leaving 331, which on reference to the table of significations, reads as follows:—Belief, faith and philosophy, for 300; love of glory, virtue, for 31; giving no bad sketch of his character. It may be as well to observe that, when the total consists of a number not precisely marked on the table, the answer may be obtained by dividing it into hundreds, tens and units; thus, supposing the number obtained was 179, it could be divided into 100, 70 and 9. Care must be taken to add up the lines of figures correctly, as the slightest mistake will of course entirely change the whole meaning.

READING FORTUNES WITH EGGS

Break a new-laid egg and carefully separating the yolk from the white, drop the latter into a large tumbler half full of water; place this, uncovered, in some dry place and let it remain untouched for four-and-twenty hours, by which time the white of the egg will have formed itself into various figures—rounds, squares, ovals, animals, trees, crosses, etc,—which are to be interpreted in the same manner as those formed by the coffee grounds. Of course the more whites there are in the glass the more figures there will be.

This is a very pretty experiment, and much practiced by the young Scotch maidens, who, however, believe it to have more efficacy when tried on either Midsummer Eve or Hallowe'en (31st October).

(To be continued)

THE MEANING OF DREAMS

EATING.—To dream you are eating is a very unfavorable omen, it portends disunion amongst your family; losses in trade and disappointment in love, storms and shipwreck by sea. To dream you see others eating is of a contrary tendency, and foretells success in all your present enterprises; that your sweetheart is kind and faithful, and that if you marry the present object of your affections you will grow rich, be happy and have dutiful children.

ECLIPSE OF THE SUN.—To dream you see an eclipse of the sun denotes that you will lose some male friend, your father, if he be alive; and that you will experience some uneasiness by the means of some treacherous friend; to a woman with child it foretells a son, who will be a great man.

ECLIPSE OF THE MOON.—To dream you see an eclipse of the moon, denotes that you will lose some female friend; you will experience great uneasiness on account of a woman; your sweetheart will be unfaithful; poverty will overtake you, and misery end your days.

ELEPHANTS.—To dream of an elephant, is a very fortunate dream; it denotes an acquirement of riches; if you are in love, it denotes a speedy marriage with your sweetheart, and many children, chiefly boys, will distinguish themselves by their learning.

FALL.—To dream you fall from any very high place, or from a tree, denotes loss of place and goods; if you are in love, it surely indicates that you will never marry the present *object* of your affections; to the tradesman it denotes a decline of business; and to the sailor, storms and shipwreck.

FAIR.—To dream you are at a fair, is a bad omen; it denotes that some pretended friend is about to do you an injury; if you are in trade, keep a keen lookout, for some swindler will certainly attempt to defraud you; if you are a farmer, be careful next time you go to market, for some one will waylay you, attempt to rob you; if you are in love, it denotes that some rival is attempting to rob you of those upon whom you have placed your affections.

FEASTING.—To dream you are at a feast, denotes that you will meet with many disappointments, particularly in the thing which you are most anxious about; in love, it forebodes much uneasiness between sweethearts; and to them which are married, it foretells undutiful children, with many heavy losses.

FIELDS.—To dream you are in green fields is a very favorable omen; in love, it denotes success and happiness; to the tradesman, success and riches; to the sailor, a pleasant and profitable voyage; to the farmer, plenty and health; if you are soliciting any place or favor be sure you will obtain it. To dream you are in plowed fields, forebodes some severe disputes that will be brought upon you by some person who has no children; to the lover, it denotes disappointment; to the married, unhappiness, and undutiful children; to the tradesman, loss of business and a prison. To dream you are in a meadow covered with flowers, is a very favorable omen; to a man it indicates a very handsome wife, who will bring him lovely children, and make him very happy; to a woman, it denotes that she will marry a very handsome young fellow, by whom she will have beautiful children, that she will become rich and live to a good old age; to the tradesman, it betokens success, good orders, and riches; if you are soliciting a place or favor, it portends you will surely obtain it.

FIGHTING.—To dream you are fighting, denotes to the lover that you will lose the object of your affections through a foolish quarrel; it also forebodes much opposition to your wishes, with loss of character and property. After such a dream, I would advise the dreamer to quit his present situation; because such a dream indicates that you will not prosper in it; to the sailor, it denotes storms and shipwreck, with disappointment in love.

FIRE.—To dream of this subtle element denotes health and happiness to the lover, marriage with the object of your affections, and many children; it also denotes that you will be very angry with some one on a trifling occasion. To dream you see burning lights descending as it were from heaven, is a very bad sign indeed; it portends some dreadful accident to the dreamer, such as being hanged, losing your head, having your brains dashed out, breaking your legs, getting into prison, or other strange accidents; to the lover, it also denotes the loss of the affections of your sweetheart; to the tradesman, bad success in business. To dream that you are burnt by fire denotes great danger, and that enemies will injure you; to the sailor, storms and shipwreck.

FISHING.—To dream that you are fishing is a sure sign of sorrow and trouble; if you catch any fish you will be successful in love and business; if you catch none you will never marry your present sweetheart, nor succeed in your present undertakings; if they slip out of your hands after you have caught them, the person you marry will be of a roving disposition, and some pretended friend will deceive you.

FLOODS.—To dream of a flood shows that you will meet with great opposition from rich neighbors, and that a rich rival will attempt to alienate the affections of your mistress; to the tradesman, it denotes law-suits, loss of business, and a prison; to the sailor, it denotes much success by sea, but danger on shore; to the farmer, it indicates loss of cattle, and a dispute with his landlord. To dream you are drowned in a flood denotes that you will quit your native land, and after many hardships and perils, return to it rich and happy, that you will marry a pretty woman, and have fine children.

(*To be continued*)

CURRENT NEWS

CALF WITH TWO HEADS

Biological classes at the Kansas State Normal School are studying the body of a two-headed calf, born the other week in a barn within a block of the Science Building. The calf lived only two days. The heads were perfectly formed.

FINDS LOST MONEY

Lost in a field more than two years ago, $12.04 has been found. While harvesting wheat Charles O'Neal lost a pocketbook containing the money. A thorough search of the field was made, but no trace of the money found.

Last year the field was planted and cultivated in corn. Recently while a colored man was hauling over O'Neal's lots he began to search and soon found the whole sum.

BELT OF EARTH MEASURED

All previous conjectures of the depth of atmosphere and belting of the earth have been smashed by successful experiments of the Norwegian astronomer, Stormer, by which he has actually measured the belt of the earth. He has found the limit of atmosphere 350 miles from the earth, or 150 times the height of Mount Whitney. Incidentally, it has been established that the real color of the sky is black, not blue.

The "infinite blue" is merely a poetical delusion.

TOWN SOLD AT AUCTION

The town of Roanake, on the boundry line between Howard and Randolph counties, Mo., has been sold under a sheriff's hammer for $410. The property included ten lots and three buildings.

Roanoke at one time was one of the busiest trading places in the State, being situated in the center of a heavy tobacco producing section. However, the building of a railroad and the founding of the town of Armstrong on it three miles south of Roanoke spelled ruin for the thriving trading center and business shifted to Armstrong almost over night.

MONKEY PRANKS

Whether the monkey really needed glasses or the attention of an oculist, or whether he thought he could eat specs, will never be known, but there is one thing John Page of Garland, Pa., does know, and that is he is out $20 he paid for glasses a short time ago, and all because a monkey in the zoo decided it would like to have them.

Page was inspecting the simian exhibit rather closely. In fact, he had his face against the cage. While he was watching one monkey cut some capers, another snatched the glasses from his face. The monkey tried to fit them on its own nose. They did not suit—probably the vision was wrong.

Then the monkey tried to eat them. When its teeth failed to masticate the glass and gold the animal slammed them on the concrete floor of the cage and shattered them into a thousand pieces. It then twisted the frame to pieces before the keeper came.

DEATHS BY POISON NEEDLES

With twelve army officers of Budapest in hospitals in consequence of having been pricked by poison needles, and a number dead, it is believed that Bolsheviki are attempting to create new disorders during the period of uneasiness attendant upon the signing of the peace treaty.

The city is thrilled with terror at these outrages, which are committed at night, when officers are going on duty, and particularly when they are in the crowds. There are few people about the streets now, the cautious ones staying within doors, and order is being kept by mounted police and squads of soldiers armed with hand grenades, pistols and rifles with fixed bayonets.

A SNEEZE-WOOD TREE

The sneeze-wood tree is a native of Natal and other parts of South Africa. Its odd name was given to it because one cannot saw it without sneezing violently, says London Tit-Bits. The dust of its wood has just the same effect as the strongest snuff, and is so irritating to the nose that workmen are obliged to sneeze even when they are planing it. If a piece of wood of this tree is put in the mouth, it is found to have a very bitter taste, and no doubt it is this bitterness which prevents insects of any kind from attacking the timber of the sneeze-wood tree. The fact that insects find it so disagreeable makes its wood very valuable for work that is required to last a long time.

RARE, BUT SOON FOUND

The easy way to find the proverbial needle in the haystack is to advertise for it. An investigator who wishes to determine whether there is any relation between stammering and cerebral congestion recently announced in the Journal of the American Medical Association that he wished he could find a stammerer whose skull had been trephined. While there are thousands of stammerers in the United States and a considerable number of persons whose skulls have been trephined, the chance of finding the two in combination seemed exceedingly slim. But the first mail the morning after the Journal was issued brought the name and address of such a person.

SCHOOL TEACHER LOST HIS SIGHT

A pathetic development of the three-day blizzard which swept Colorado and adjoining States in April is the case of Benjamin R. Curry, a young school teacher in District No. 42, about twenty-five miles south of Fort Morgan, Col. Curry braved the heavy snow, which came down in a sleet hail form in that district to get to his schoolhouse. As a result his eyesight has been injured by snow blindness.

Curry stayed at the schoolhouse all day Tuesday when his sight began to waver. Late in the afternoon he started for his home, several miles away. As he entered the house a sudden blackness struck him and has remained since. Physicians declare he must give up his school work and say he will be blind for several months.

The work of Curry, who is married and has one child, is highly spoken of by local school officials.

WISE RATS

Investigators of mining conditions and the peculiar dangers to which miners are subjected recently have taken much interest in the practice of Western gold miners to make pets of the rats which commonly infest mines. On the mother lode vein of California it has been found that the miners invariably feed the rats and take care of them, believing that the rodents are a source of protection against accidents. This is due, the men say, to the instinct of the rats, which warns them when a tunnel is unsafe. And when the rats leave a tunnel it is almost impossible to get the miners to work there. This recalls the belief among sailors that rats will leave a doomed ship. The miners also have found that rats are much more susceptible than humans to the dangerous gases that so often cause loss of life in the mines. Long before the miners themselves are affected by these gases the rats become sick and show symptoms of distress. So the men keep close watch on the rats' good health.

FIND FULLY CLOTHED SKELETON OF WOMAN

Unsolved for more than twenty years, the mystery surrounding the disappearance of Miss Carrie Selvage was believed to be cleared away with the finding of a skeleton in the private hospital, Indianapolis, Ind., where she was last seen, March 11, 1900. The coroner found no trace of violence. She had been a teacher and was 43 years of age.

The skeleton was found by workmen who were turning the old building into a garage. Clothed in a blue dress, it was resting in a sitting posture in the corner of an attic. The costume, along with a pair of felt slippers, were recognized by three brothers of the dead woman. They are Edward L., William J. and Joseph W. Selvage, members of an old Indianapolis family.

The old building originally was an orphans' home and later was converted into the Union State Hospital. It was at that time Miss Selvage entered the institution because of a nervous disease. Some time later it was turned into a rooming house. The building was of unusual construction, and the place where the skeleton was found, a small corner about three by four feet, apparently was a second attic.

A CAT'S WHISKERS

Why does a cat have whiskers? asks the Popular Science Monthly. This question comes under the larger one—what is the function of eye appendages? Mr. P. F. Swindle has investigated this subject very thoroughly, and he has formed some startling conclusions, which he reports in the American Journal of Psychology.

Your First Reader told you, in simple words and large type, that pussy's whiskers, wide as his body, were there to warn him of the sized hole he could crawl through, but that reason did not suit psychologists, and they have recently proved that whiskers aid the cat's eye.

Most animals have eye appendages that seem to obstruct their vision. And many of those that haven't any use substitutes—the snake, for instance, continually thrusts out its tongue. But, according to Mr. Swindle's investigations, these obstructing appendages really aid the eye. When an animal watches its prey or stares at a branch that it intends to land on it wiggles its whiskers constantly and thereby rests its eyes. Thus, instead of becoming blurred in time, the object it watches is always sharply defined.

Mr. Swindle experimented with a tomcat, watching him first with his whiskers on, and then watching him after the whiskers had been shaved off. Tommy soon changed from a fat, well fed cat to a thin, hungry one.

AMPUTATED LIMBS RETURN IN DREAMS

Dr. Edred M. Corner, the famous London surgeon, has been studying the dreams of persons who have lost an arm or leg by amputation, and he reports some interesting observations to The Practicioner. It is well known that after amputation the lost limb is still felt, at any rate, for a time, and such sensations are called "phantom limbs."

Dr. Corner says these are unusual among the young but frequent among the older, and they pass away with time, after eight months or a year the patient being unconscious of the lost limb except when he thinks about it. A man who has lost one limb may dream that he has lost both or that he has lost the wrong one, or that the one amputated is still there but seems awkward or hurts; the dreamer cannot bend the phantom leg or arm or finds it stiff and heavy.

Badly fitting artificial limbs aggravate the sensations, evidently by irritating the severed nerves. Cold, damp, changes of weather and absence of occupation for the mind increase the sensations. The nearer the trunk the limb has been cut off the worse are the pains and the longer they are likely to continue.

Sometimes an operation or massage will cure a persistent case, but generally it has to be left to time.

COMMERCIAL IMPORTANCE OF PALESTINE

In the minds of most people the Holy Land is hardly associated with trade and industry, yet as a matter of fact Palestine was one of the few provinces of the Turkish Empire where economic activities were pursued with energy and success. This, says the London *Economist*, is brought out effectively by comparing the value of Turkish trade as a whole with that of Palestine.

Two causes have contributed chiefly to bring about this commercial expansion. The railway system is one, the character of the population the other.

The geographical position of Palestine, now as throughout the ages, makes it the highway between Asia Minor on the one hand and Egypt and Arabia on the other. This will explain why the Turkish Government devoted more attention to railway construction in Palestine than in any other province.

Palestine may not perhaps be made into a land flowing with milk and honey, but its possibilities are nevertheless encouraging. Agriculture will, of course, continue to be the main source of the country's wealth, yielding oranges, wines and olives, to say nothing of the splendid barley grown in the Gaza district. Cattle breeding has also been attempted on a small scale with satisfactory results. The manufacture of wine, brandy and raisins is capable of great expansion; the manufacture of soap will be facilitated by the abundance of oil, and there is an opening for the cigarette industry, which will be able to depend on home-grown tobacco of excellent quality. Fishing, too, may be developed to advantage. The country has an abundance of water power.

One other thing the country possesses—a great attraction for the tourist. In addition to the natural beauties of the country and the prospective seaside resorts, which for health-giving qualities might rival the Riviera, the historical association of Palestine will long retain a strong interest for Jews, Christians and Mohammedans alike.

LOCATING OIL BY ELECTRICAL MEANS

The idea of using current transmitted through the earth as a means of locating metal ores is familiar, the belief being the greater conductivity of these metalliferous regions can be clearly indicated, and the area mapped out, says the Scientific American. The location of oil deposits, which according to the Electrical Review is now being investigated electrically, presents a converse problem. In this case the insulating properties of the oil-bearing regions are detected accordingly. In view of the great depth to which it is often necessary to bore for oil—oil that may exist simultaneously with an almost oil-free area above—the method would seem to have limitations, but it has doubtless possibilities in dealing with surface oil-areas.

X-RAY DISCLOSES FACES

Science is bringing out a good many odd things that have been concealed for centuries to light. The use of the X-ray has brought out faces and figures painted over in the paintings of old masters.

A curious demonstration of the success of radiography in this respect was given by Major G. W. C. Kaye in a lecture at the Royal Institution.

He showed two pictures by Dutch masters, one representing the Madonna and another the Crucifixion.

In the former the Madonna appeared to be looking at something which was non-existent on the canvas, but a radiograph examination proved that the missing something was a child, which a former owner of the picture had evidently disapproved and had painted out.

In the second picture a lady in an attitude of prayer was discovered to have been painted over what was in the original the figure of a man in monkish garb.

Radiography, said the lecturer, had shown flaws in airplanes, and so avoided possible accidents. In one instance the steel axles of the under carriages of airplanes had been drilled in the wrong position, and the holes had been simply filled up with metal and filed over. An entire lot was rejected in consequence, and probably a serious disaster averted.

It had been posible, said the lecturer, to penetrate three inches of steel, six inches of alloy and twelve inches of wood.

Lead was a much more effective resistant, and it had been found that complete protection for the operator would be provided by about one-eighth of an inch of that metal.

BOTTLED LIGHT

There exists in the tropical countries of America and in the West Indies a curious species of insect which the natives call "Cocuyos" or "Coleopterus Noctilucid," meaning night light bug. This insect emits a brilliant green light from each eye and a green light from the under part of the stomach.

Some of the natives in Cuba, Mexico, and South America use the bug light to read by, placing about fifty bugs in a long glass tube or bottle, called a "Cocuyera." Another method is to hang the "Cocuyera" over one's bed and then when you want to see the time at night, strike the bottle gently with the hand, when the "Cocuyos" will light up.

This bug is quite harmless and inoffensive and can be carried in the hand. If its stomach is gently pressed by forefinger and thumb the bug will give a light like a small electric torch. These peculiar animals vary in size, but the largest come from the Province of Pinar del Rio, in Cuba, and measure two and a half inches in length by one-half to three-quarter inch in thickness. They give forth a very powerful light. They are black in color and feed on sweet potatoes, rotten wood and corn cane.

They are easily captured. A boy will light a cigar, and whirling the same in his hand over his head he makes a noise with his mouth sounding like r-r-r-r-r. In a few minutes his arm will be entirely covered with the "cocuyos," taking on the aspect of an electric pole of green light. He then proceeds to take them off and places them in a basket, where previously he has placed a few pieces of corn cane.

Care must always be taken to keep the "cocuyos" from eating sugar, for if they do, their legs drop off, their brilliant light fades, and they will die. The "cocuyos" lay their eggs in rotten trees, and sometimes these trees assume a very beautiful aspect, for from a distance they look like a long pole full of glowing little green electric globes.

Señor Felipe Poey, the Cuban naturalist, whom the great German naturalist, Humboldt, came from China to confer with, has expressed his opinion that the light produced by "Coleopterus Noctilucid" is due to an excess of electric phosphorescence. Sometimes they conceal their light, but by gently pressing the stomach the light will flare forth again with renewed strength.

SNAKE POISON

It is said that about half a drop of Indian cobra venom is sufficient to kill a man. That means that a full sized cobra would be able to eject enough venom at a single full and complete bite to kill about twenty persons. The Indian cobra yields as many as twenty drops, and there is of record one specimen that gave as many as twenty-eight drops.

In experiments with the venom of the cobra of the Cape in Africa, Fitzsimmons found that one drop diluted in a little water and injected into the tissues of the leg of a large monkey killed it in half an hour's time. A fraction of a drop was sufficient to kill a rat within an hour. Judging from the effect of cobravenom on the higher animals, it is held that one full drop is a fatal dose for a strong, healthy man.

The deadly power of snake poison has been shown in some curious ways. Of these perhaps none is more extraordinary than that of the Chinaman who, while gathering grapes in the vineyard of a Californian, was bitten by a rattler.

The unfortunate man was immediately given the usual remedies, and as an additional measure, his injured arm was placed in a bath filled with strong native brandy, the expectation being that the spirit would aid in dissolving the poison from the wound. Nevertheless, in a short time the man died.

The point of the incident lies in the fact that the employer, wishing to make sure that the Chinaman kept his arm well soaked in the liquid, held it down in the brandy with his own hand.

He was not aware that there was any scratch upon his skin, yet he was poisoned, and for a long time was dreadfully ill. He finally recovered, but only after much suffering. Only a tiny part of the poison could have become dissolved by the four gallons of brandy, yet it was apparently enough to inoculate the owner to a dangerous extent. One authority on snakes has declared the venom of the rattler will affect even vegetables. Having inoculated various varieties with a point of a lancet, he found them the next day withered and dead, looking as if they had been struck by lightning.

WORSHIP LIVING MEN IN CHINA

Man worship is still practiced in China, according to the Rev. E. S. Burket, a Baptist missionary of Changning, who found two disciples of the late Liau, seated on thrones and receiving the obeisance of thousands of their followers. Dr. Burket has just returned to this country to take part in the New World Movement of Northern Baptists.

Liau, who achieved local fame about 30 years ago because of his reputed power of healing diseases and relieving the oppressed in spirit, was executed by the authorities, who feared an uprising. Two of Liau's disciples, Ling Shuk and Lai Sam Shuk, however, like their master, began to heal diseases in his name and gradually were raised by their following to the same godlike rank accorded to Liau.

Link Shuk is 71 years old and Lai Sam Shuk eight years his junior. Several ornate temples have been built to Liua. At the main one, located at Liau's birthplace about 15 miles from Changning, the missionary found gathered more than 2,000 people to celebrate Liau's anniversary. The two immortals were seated on the highest of a series of terraces with an empty throne between them for the spirit of Liau. Before them stood a large table covered with ornamental objects and in front of this the worshippers go through strange gymnastics.

HOPE OF A NEW POWER

One of those tremendously important little items which get buried in the news pages because of their briefness, but which really deserve flaming headlines, was that Italy's most famous chemist has announced the discovery of a cheap method for obtaining "liquid hydrogen"—that is, hydrogen gas in a liquid form, says the Buffalo Enquirer.

The importance of this discovery, which because of the standing of its author may be assumed to be authentic, is that it opens up the possibility and carries the hope of producing a new and practically unlimited source of liquid fuel for internal combustion engines of the motor type. Moreover, it is a tremendous power fuel.

Liquid hydrogen, burned in motor cylinders, is capable of driving an average automobile all of 250 miles per gallon. More than this, since hydrogen composes two-thirds of all the water of the globe, the basis of supply is inexhaustible. Only the cost of producing the gas and reducing it to a form in which it could be utilized has stood in the way of its use as a fuel. The component gases of water form potentially the largest available future source of motor fuel.

If Italy's leading chemist has actually developed a means of obtaining liquid hydrogen cheaply, or even at a reasonable commercial cost, his discovery will ultimately revolutionize the world's combustion-engine fuel problem and remove the strain on the globe's limited supply of gasoline.

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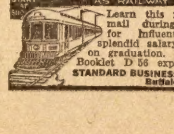

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